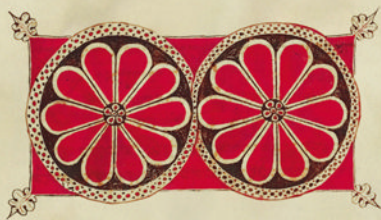




City of Ruins

MOURNING THE DESTRUCTION
OF JERUSALEM THROUGH
JEWISH APOCALYPSE



DERECK DASCHKE

BRILL

City of Ruins

Biblical Interpretation Series

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City of Ruins

Mourning the Destruction of Jerusalem
Through Jewish Apocalypse

By
Dereck Daschke



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The images included throughout the book are for evocative rather than informative purposes. The Introduction and Chapters Two

through Four contain reproductions of woodcuts from the *Doré Illustrated Bible* (1866), which I have always found to so perfectly capture the melancholic mood of the apocalyptic figures at the center of this study. Chapter One contains a reproduction of Albrecht Dürer's 1514 woodcut "Melancholia I," a fitting reflection of the theme of that chapter. All images exist in the public domain.

Finally, two important women have been central in my life during this project: Carmen, during the years of writing the dissertation, and Jen, during the long process of revision and preparing this manuscript. I thank them for all they have been, and continue to be, in my life.

INTRODUCTION

“IF I FORGET YOU, O JERUSALEM”: TRAUMATIC MEMORY AND THE FALL OF ZION

Mourning in Jewish tradition exhibits an unmistakable psychology. Maurice Lamm, in *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*, claims,

The insight of the Bible, together with the accumulated religious experience of centuries, has taught the Jew how best to manage the grief situation. It was only with the rise of modern psychology... that the value of this grief structure has been recognized.¹

Mourning as religious expression has been institutionalized in Judaism in numerous traditions, many of which relate in some way to the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The fast day of Tisha b'Av is set aside annually to remember the fallen Temple. The First Temple, traditionally believed to have been built by King Solomon, was burnt to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army in 587 B.C.E. on Tisha b'Av, after a decade-long occupation and conquest of Jerusalem. The rebuilt Second Temple fell victim on the same date in 70 C.E. to the Roman suppression of the Jewish revolt. Subsequent tragedies through the ages are also associated with this day of mourning, including the Jewish expulsions from England and Spain, creating a moment once a year in the collective experience when the faithful re-experience in their present lives the full force of the pain and loss inflicted upon them as a people over the millennia. Of course, the sole remnant of the Second Temple, its Western Wall, so came to memorialize the loss of the sacred Jewish world that observers would refer to it as the 'Wailing Wall,' due to the lamentations of pilgrims at the site. It has served as a chronic reminder of the loss of a Jewish

¹ Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David, 1969), 77. See also G. Gerson, "The Psychology of Grief and Mourning in Judaism," *Journal of Religion and Health* 16 (1977): 260–74; Irwin Kidorf, "Jewish Tradition and the Freudian Theory of Mourning," *Journal of Religion and Health* 2 (1963): 248–52; and "The Shiva: A Form of Group Psychotherapy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 5 (1966): 43–46. Emanuel Feldman's exceptional structural analysis of the *halakhah* of mourning rituals, *Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning: Law as Theology* (New York: KTAV, 1977) is also noteworthy in this regard.

homeland, but it also provides a physical manifestation of the hope for its restoration in the future.²

Perhaps the greatest expression of mourning for Jerusalem and the First Temple following their destruction is the Book of Lamentations, which begins,

How lonely sits the city that was full of people!
 How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations!
 She that was like a princess among the cities has become a vassal.
 She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks.... (1:1–2a).³

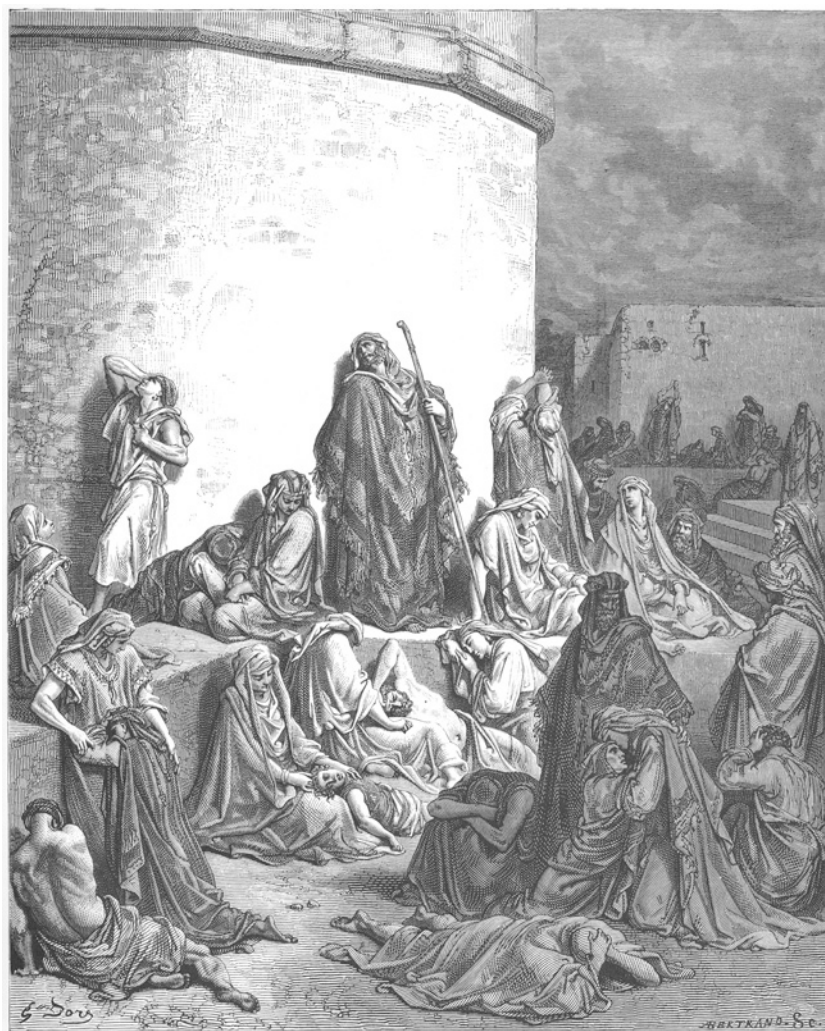
The Book of Lamentations represents one of the first reconsiderations of the Holy City and the religion of the Judeans in light of the Babylonian Conquest (see figure 1). Delbert Hillers describes the wrenching emotions of the lament, saying, “In line after line the poet recalls all the precious, sacred things which had been lost or shattered” including “the land itself, Israel’s ‘inheritance’ from Yahweh, now turned over to strangers.” This lament captures the bewilderment and sense of unreality that follows a devastating blow to the order of life, especially as “it was Yahweh himself who had consumed Israel.” It is “so complete and honest and eloquent an expression of grief that even centuries after the events which inspired it, it is still able to provide those in mute despair with words to speak.”⁴ In the course of the poem, the city mourns, the highways mourn, the elders mourn, the author mourns, as if for a

² Amos Elon, *Jerusalem: Battlegrounds of Memory* (New York: Kodansha America, 1995), 36, 82. Not surprisingly, in light of his views on unfinished mourning to be examined in the next chapter, Sigmund Freud scoffed at the Jewish brooding over this ‘relic.’ In a letter to Albert Einstein, no less, he opined: “I can muster no sympathy whatever for the misguided piety that makes a national religion from a piece of the wall of Herod”; quoted in Elon, *Jerusalem*, 238.

³ In fact, Ig Gous argues that the very structure of Lamentations—a rigid acrostic construction with verses beginning with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet—may both reflect the experience of the loss and draw an audience through the process of grief and consolation via neuro-linguistic strategies (Gous, “Psychological Survival Strategies in Lamentations 3 in the Light of Neuro-Linguistic Programming,” in *Old Testament Science and Reality*, [ed. W. Wessels and E. Scheffler; Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1992], 317–41).

Except where indicated, biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version, with occasional modification by the author.

⁴ Delbert Hillers, *Lamentations* (The Anchor Bible Commentary; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), xv–xvi.



THE PEOPLE MOURNING OVER THE RUINS OF JERUSALEM

How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations ... (Lamentations 1:1)

(Jer. 39 :8)

Figure 1: “The People Mourning over the Ruins of Jerusalem.” From the *Doré Illustrated Bible*, Gustave Doré, 1866.

person (Lam 1:1–2:10).⁵ It is for this reason, surely, that Lamentations came to be read liturgically on Tisha b'Av.

To be sure, the desperate condition in which the Babylonians left the People of Israel is conveyed elsewhere in Biblical literature. Psalm 74 gives voice to the bewilderment of those left in the wake of such tragedy:

Why have you rejected us forever, O God?
 Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?...
 Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins,
 all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary....
 They burned your sanctuary to the ground;
 they defiled the dwelling place of your Name.
 They said in their hearts, "We will crush them completely!"
 They burned every place where God was worshiped in the land.
 We are given no miraculous signs; no prophets are left,
 and none of us knows how long this will be. (vv. 1, 3, 7–9)

Of course no reflection on the impact of the Babylonian Exile in scripture is complete without considering Psalm 137, an expression of the tenuousness with which Jews are tied by memory to their homeland while in Exile:

By the rivers of Babylon—
 there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion....
 How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?
 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!
 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you.
 (vv. 1, 4–6a)⁶

These passages neatly illustrate two important concerns held by a people in exile, removed from the social environment that once reflected their identity to themselves and the ancient Near Eastern world. For some, the immediate loss of their home threatens to become permanent not through the action of their conquerors but due to their inability to remember through cultural expression what defines them. Secondly, individuals need to stave off this social forgetting by fully and completely remembering what is gone; that is, by re-experiencing the pain of the loss, living through it again. In this way, by mourning not just

⁵ Hillers, *Lamentations*, 20–21; 44–45.

⁶ On the scriptural remembrance and expression of the trauma of the Exile, see Mark S. Smith, *The Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 39.

their home but themselves as they once were, they affix a meaning to their past from which they can begin to assess their future.

Some two and a half millennia after the events of the Babylonian Conquest and Exile, in 1913, Sigmund Freud was walking in the Italian Alps with some friends who were deeply affected by the impermanence of things. Freud, however, did not share this sentiment—or their sentimentality. Two years later, he reflected on this episode in light of the devastation wrought by World War I, which had delivered not just a physical and personal toll of cities destroyed and lives lost, but it also had dealt a severe blow to Europe's nineteenth century optimism about itself. In his essay "On Transience," he states that the war

shattered our pride in the achievements of our civilization....It made our country small again and made the rest of the world far remote. It robbed us of very much that we had loved, and showed us how ephemeral were many things we had regarded as changeless.⁷

The Jews survived the Exile by reinventing their institutions and beliefs to create the theological moorings of Second Temple Judaism, the legacy of which continues to this day. Like them, Freud expected his own civilization to overcome its loss, to recover and prosper as future generations came to terms with their past:

When once the mourning is over, it will be found that our high opinion of the riches of civilization has lost nothing from our discovery of their fragility. We shall build up again all that war has destroyed, and perhaps on firmer ground and more lastingly than before.⁸

This study addresses the way in which a set of texts from the apocalyptic genre reflects and confirms this expectation for certain Jews in the cultures from which these texts derive.⁹ It directly relates the loss of Jerusalem and its Temple—first to the Babylonians, then again six centuries later to the Romans—to a psychoanalytic model of mourning.

⁷ Freud, "On Transience" (1916; in vol. 14 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*; trans. James Strachey; London: Hogarth, 1957), 304; henceforth *The Standard Edition* will be designated SE. James Strachey notes that "On Transience" contains in miniature the theory of mourning put forth by "Mourning and Melancholia" in 1917, which Freud had written in November 1915 but had not yet published (Strachey, notes to "On Transience," 307).

⁸ Freud, "On Transience," 307.

⁹ Beginning with, however, a key component of the prophetic corpus, the Book of Ezekiel, that exhibits all of the characteristics of apocalyptic literature relevant to this study and so will be treated as such.

This model has deep roots in Freud's classic statement on the subject, his 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholia," but it is developed to address the convergence of unconscious creativity, scriptural narrative, and the use of the past in a culture's response to a national disaster.

I believe the texts examined in this study, the canonical Book of Ezekiel and the pseudipigraphic 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and 3 Baruch, which I am collectively calling the 'Zion Apocalypses,' are unique in the extent to which they have the potential to mediate between individual anxieties and hopes arising from the loss of the Zionist symbol system and the people's aspirations to create and maintain a viable, meaningful culture, even in the most dire of environments. This culture and indeed the social body itself would be rooted in a view of God who is master and maker of all Creation, including the unfolding of a history that had injured them so grievously. Through the course of their narratives, their dense symbolism, their naked emotionality and ambivalence, and their reliance on otherworldly authority to reveal new knowledge, these texts ameliorate the violent loss of the major markers of traditional Judaism by guiding an apocalyptic seer and, by implication, the author and his intended audience through the process of mourning. But because of the nature of the loss, this process is met with rage, apathy, or self-annihilating sentiments, and hence these texts, at first, more closely resemble a situation of incomplete, stalled mourning, or *melancholia*.¹⁰

Apocalypses in general reveal a good deal of anxiety about loss or endings; they, in fact, deal with the *end of the world*. There can be no greater loss. Even the idyllic New Age that often follows the apocalypse marks the end of the current one. Many scenarios envision this transformation being brought about by the violent destruction of much of the earth's population, sinners and righteous alike. For this reason, apocalypses are often associated with times of crisis, whether by scholars trying to ascertain their historical origins or by Endtime believers who perceive the unpleasant events of history as signs that the scenarios revealed in these texts are coming true.

Of course, not all crises produce apocalypses, but some do; and certainly the destruction of the Temple affected Jews on all levels:

¹⁰ 3 Bar. represents the exception that proves the rule here, though; as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, it seems to mark the end of mourning in this apocalyptic tradition.

personally, socially, psychologically, spiritually. For those who found apocalyptic depictions of history, society, and the heavens compelling, these texts may have resonated deeply. Furthermore, the vicarious connection with the apocalyptician's experiences very well could have alleviated some pervasive anxiety and expressed unspoken, even heretofore taboo sentiments, articulating a new view of the world that made sense of the disturbing nature of reality. Sociologist Karl Mannheim calls such a creative trigger in culture a *catalyst*, which is often seen as a motivating factor behind apocalypticism or millenarianism.¹¹ I do not claim that the texts under consideration are a representative response of a specifically identifiable group, though some (scribes, certain Rabbinic schools) may have left a distinct imprint in the literature. Nor are they consensus statements for contemporary Jewish society as a whole, for there is a wide variety of responses to a given cultural situation, and the calamities that befell Jerusalem are certainly no exception. For those Jews affected in a certain way by the tragedy of history, though, these texts may have provided a means of stepping outside the bounds of both traditional expectations and mundane time and space, into a creative realm in which other realities could be imagined. Understood correctly, the fantastic realms of apocalypse offer an ideological structure upon which a new Jewish world could be constructed.

‘Zion’ in Apocalypse

As noted, I will refer to this set of texts as the Zion Apocalypses. Sometimes the overt concern in one text is for the fall of Temple, in others it is Jerusalem as a whole; other times it is the Jewish people collectively. ‘Zion’ metonymically connotes all three at once.¹² The Temple

¹¹ Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations,” in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (ed. Paul Kecskemeti; New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), 305, 310; see also Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (trans. L. Wirth and E. Shils; New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1936), 206; Stephen Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 48; Y. Talmon, “Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change,” *Archives européennes de sociologie* 3 (1962): 133–34.

¹² J.D. Levenson, “Zion Traditions,” *ABD* 6:1099. At least by Exilic times, the term had, as indicated, expanded its meanings to include the city itself, as in Lam 2:6–8 and Second Isaiah (e.g., Isa 49:14–26; 54:1–17). On Lamentations, see Levenson, “Zion Traditions,” 1098. On Second Isaiah, see Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish*

was the institutional center and ‘master symbol’ that represented the continuity of God’s protection, presence, and the nation’s prosperity since the traditional beginnings of the monarchy over four centuries earlier. Paul Hanson asserts,

Recognition of the pivotal role of the Yahwistic religious symbol system in the life of the nation, and specifically of the central religious significance of the Temple, provides background for considering the effects of the destruction of Zion on the survivors. Here we can be aided by the insights of modern social scientists into such situations of calamity.¹³

For many the covenantal promises and protections had become organically ingrained, an unshakeable perception of reality, a trusted view of the cosmos, a matter of traditional identity. Concomitant with such a worldview was a belief that the Israelite God acted meaningfully in history to save and protect his people. The single key event in ancient Jewish history, at least since the saving act of the Exodus and the giving of the Law at Sinai, was then the siege of Jerusalem, the exile of its elite, and the destruction of the Temple in 587.¹⁴

The symbolic sense of this complex usage of the term ‘Zion’ is at the core of the apocalyptic texts that I treat in this study, whether they use the name Zion explicitly or not.¹⁵ These apocalypses are each concerned with the violation or eradication of the space designated as

Thought: The Jewish Experience in History (New York: MacMillan, 1980), 125. In the late Exilic and early post-Exilic periods, the metonymic usage comes to encompass the people as a whole, as at Isa 51:16 and Zech 2:11.

¹³ “The destruction of the Temple, and all of the repercussions attending that destruction, represent a classical case of social anomie” (Paul Hanson, “Israelite Religion in the Early Postexilic Period,” in *Ancient Israelite Religion* [ed. Patrick Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 489). Joshua Berman also speaks of the Temple’s role in this way: “[T]he Temple needs to be construed as part of an organic whole and cannot be studied in isolation. As the center of Israel’s national and spiritual life, it relates integrally to many of the institutional pillars of the Jewish faith—the Sabbath, the land of Israel, kingship, and justice, just to mention a few.... Symbols are a cornerstone of the collective consciousness of a culture” (Berman, *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now* [Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1995], xx).

¹⁴ See Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1987), 83–86; Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 56.

¹⁵ Ezek and 3 Bar. do not, 4 Ezra and 2 Bar. do. Thomas Renz makes a convincing case that despite the lack of nomenclature, Ezek clearly works within the literary and theological Zionist traditions (Renz, “The Use of the Zion Tradition in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *Zion: City of our God* [ed. Richard Hess and Gordon Wenham; Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999], 86–103).

holy for YHWH. An act against the Temple came part and parcel with a larger attack on or occupation of the city, and involved the military execution, deportation, or enslavement of its populace, all of which were unthinkable in Zionistic theology.¹⁶ The triple loss of the Temple, the monarchy, and the land was devastating. It disrupted the schedule of sacrifice, offerings, and yearly festivals; it nullified Judah's military and political independence. For those invested in the Zionistic worldview, history had given the lie to reality as they knew it. In a single blow, their central symbol had been eradicated, shattering with it the concomitant beliefs regarding the invulnerability and permanence of YHWH's chosen land, city, and house. The experience was ultimately recapitulated in the loss of the Second Temple to the Romans. Each time, whether in Judah or the Diaspora, both individually and collectively, Jews were forced to give up their former worldview and to come to terms with a new one. For this reason, to understand why the apocalyptic texts would return time and again to the most devastating moment in ancient Jewish history, modern scholars must start with the *symbolic loss* occasioned by the blow to Zion as a whole.

Peter Homans understands the impact of symbolic loss on a culture thusly:

Typically, symbolic loss refers to the loss of an attachment to a political ideology or religious creed, or to some aspect or fragment of one, and to the inner work of coming to terms with this kind of loss. In this sense it resembles mourning. However, in the case of symbolic loss the object that is lost is, ordinarily, sociohistorical, cognitive, and collective. The lost object is a symbol or rather a system of symbols and not a person. And the inner work of coming to terms with the loss of such symbols is by no means always followed by generative or creative repair or recovery,

¹⁶ While it is unclear that ‘inviolability’ is an essential part of the Zion tradition (cf. Renz, “Zion Tradition,” 84), it certainly has been promulgated within the prophetic corpus, e.g., Isa 37:33, 35. But by the time of the impending Babylonian crisis, the prophet Jeremiah's proclamation of doom is ultimately aimed directly at those who have regarded the Temple inviolate forever: “Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord. . . .’ Here you are, trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Ba'al, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are safe!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?” (Jer 7:4, 8–10; cf. 4:9–10). The prophet subsequently speaks the Word of God on the Temple steps (Jer 26), warning of the sanctuary's destruction if the people do not heed God's law and his prophets. This flagrant challenge to the conventional wisdom of the time met with official concern and potential execution for its messenger.

but as often by disillusionment, or disappointment, or despair. Some sort of combination of 'resignation,' along with some mourning, is the best way to describe the most common form of this 'coming to terms with the past.'¹⁷

The tragedy that befell the ancient Judaic religious system was a symbolic loss of the highest order. It offered a stark choice: reinvent the Yahwistic worldview or be lost forever. It required the People of Israel to withdraw their bonds to the only home they knew, but it also demanded that they reinvest in a new symbol system, one that could sustain a new identity and relationship to the world, God, and the future.

As Homans indicates, the ancient Jews were necessarily pulled backward into the past by despair even as they were compelled to look forward in the process of mourning. Daniel Smith suggests as much when he states that the

emphasis on the exilic hope for restoration, by the very nature of this term, tends to highlight what once was, and the depth of the loss.¹⁸

The Zion Apocalypses richly convey these emotions, both the despair that the depth of the loss engenders as well as the elation inherent in the promise of restoration. A symbolic loss on the order of the Babylonian Conquest inextricably ties fear and hope, despair and desire together in any response to it. The focus, scope, and meaning of these texts justify their designation as 'Zion Apocalypses,' but also their treatment as shaped definitively by the major symbolic loss in Jewish culture. Not surprisingly, acts and expressions of mourning play a considerable role in them.

Mourning, the Fall of Jerusalem, and Apocalypse

The mournful quality of apocalyptic literature dealing with threats to Zion has remained largely unacknowledged, despite the numerous

¹⁷ Peter Homans, "Introduction: The Decline of Mourning Practices in Modern Western Societies: A Short Sketch," in *Symbolic Loss: The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End* (ed. Peter Homans; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 20.

¹⁸ Daniel Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington, Ind.: Meyer-Stone, 1989), 6; cf. 81, 192.

direct references to that very state of mind.¹⁹ Daniel 9:3–19, addressing the military incursions against Jerusalem and its Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century B.C.E., is a lamentation for the people and the land, with specific reference to Israelite mourning practices: "Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes," it begins. 4 Ezra opens with the figure of Ezra bemoaning the destruction that had occurred thirty years earlier: "I was troubled as I lay on my bed, and my thoughts welled up in my heart, because I saw the desolation of Zion and the wealth of those who lived in Babylon" (3:1b–2).²⁰ Chapters 9 and 10 relate Ezra's account of a mourning woman, who is then transformed into the Heavenly Zion.

2 Baruch, a response contemporary with 4 Ezra, presents the scribe Baruch mourning at the time of the attack against Jerusalem: "And I was grieving over Zion and lamenting over the captivity that had come upon the people" (6:2a).²¹ Then ch. 9 states,

And I, Baruch, came, together with Jeremiah....and we rent our clothes and wept, and we mourned and fasted seven days.

2 Baruch 10 is primarily composed of a lament:

I, Baruch, came back and sat in front of the doors of the Temple, and I raised the following lamentation over Zion and said, "Blessed is he who was not born, or he who was born and died. But we, the living, woe to us, because we have seen those afflictions of Zion, and that which has befallen Jerusalem. I will call the Sirens from the sea, and you, Lilin, come from the desert, and you, demons and dragons from the woods. Awake and gird up your loins to mourn, and raise lamentations with me, and mourn with me. (10:5b–8)

¹⁹ However, depictions of mourning are pervasive throughout the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the prophetic corpus, as Saul Olyan's invaluable compendium, *Biblical Mourning: Ritual and Social Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) makes clear. Although he does not specifically analyze mourning and apocalyptic literature in his work, Olyan does include among his contexts of Biblical mourning "mourning after the destruction of Jerusalem" and "mourning to seek divine revelation" (*Biblical Mourning*, 20).

²⁰ References to 4 Ezra are from "The Fourth Book of Ezra," trans. B.M. Metzger, in *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*; ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 525–79.

²¹ References to 2 Bar. are from "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," trans. A.F.J. Klijn, in Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic*, 621–52.

The prophetic book of Ezekiel shares many of the features seen here in apocalyptic literature, and for the purposes of this study will be included in the genre. The prophet does not directly express his chagrin, but rather is forced to swallow a scroll on which are written words of “lamentation and mourning and woe” (קִנְיִם וְהִגָּה וְהִי) (2:10b). Later, at the same time that God has announced the impending destruction of Jerusalem, the “bloody city,” he also informs Ezekiel that he will take the prophet’s wife in death—but prohibits him from mourning her.

[Y]ou shall not mourn or weep nor shall your tears run down. Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet; do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of mourners. (24:16b–17)

That Ezekiel’s prohibition against mourning for his personal loss is meant to be a symbolic instruction to the Exiles against mourning their lost Temple, city, and families is made explicit at vv. 22–24a:

And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of mourners. Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet; you shall not mourn or weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and groan to one another. Thus shall Ezekiel be to you a sign; according to all that he has done you shall do.

The visionary in the apocalypse known as 3 Baruch also receives a divine request to give up mourning for the loss of the city:

Woe, now I Baruch (was) weeping in my mind and considering the people and how King Nebuchadnezzar was permitted by God to plunder his city.... And behold, while I was weeping and saying such things, I saw an angel of the Lord coming and saying to me, “Know, O man, greatly beloved man, and do not concern yourself so much over the salvation of Jerusalem. For thus says the Lord God Almighty.... Cease irritating God, and I will disclose to you other mysteries greater than these.” (1:1, 3, 6b)²²

As opposed to Ezekiel’s encounter, this directive seems less a hard prohibition than a request to move forward and leave the past behind, as there are greater things to understand, now and in the future.

From these illustrative passages, I posit that the expression of mourning in the Zion Apocalypses is not mere genre convention but

²² References to 3 *Bar.* are from “3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch,” trans. H.E. Gaylord, Jr., in Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic*, 663–79.

rather is meant to speak honestly and directly about the environment of grief that permeated the memory of Zion, especially in the form of the ruins of the Temple building. The apocalypticists mourn for their own loss in connection with the sacred structure but, mostly, their laments express sorrow and bewilderment at what has happened to their people, land, and God. Modern investigators of the social, psychological, and symbolic effects of a disaster like the destruction of Zion would call it a *national trauma*.

National Trauma and Symbolic Loss

Whether positively or negatively, events that affect a nation as whole are experienced both on the individual level of its citizens and at the level of cultural discourse and collective memory, which is to be understood as the social construction of the meaning of history and the past, especially as preserved by tradition, common culture, and social institutions.²³ Those who were part of its religio-political system lived and died by its fortunes in a very real sense, whether in the battlefield or in the execution of the duties of its officials. So the conquest and exile of the Judean royal and priestly classes would have been a blow that tore at the very foundations of the culture, creating shockwaves felt for generations. The subsequent destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the failed revolt by Bar Kochba, and the expulsion of the Jews into the Diaspora would have been extraordinary recapitulations of this original collective or national trauma.

According to social psychologist Arthur Neal, author of *National Trauma and Collective Memory*,

An event becomes a collective trauma when it appears to threaten or seriously invalidate our usual assessments of social reality. Under such conditions, doubts emerge about the future as an extension of the present, and social events are perceived as discontinuous. Forces are operating

²³ While it may be technically anachronistic to refer to Judeans or Jews as the 'the People' (or 'Children') of Israel as 'citizens' of a 'nation' in the strictest socio-political sense, certainly they maintained a collective identity centered around the land, the capital at Jerusalem, and its political and religious structures. This designation for the whole of the Israelite or Jewish people should, of course, not be confused with the population of the northern kingdom of Israel, especially as for the most part these apocalypses refer to events that affected the population of the southern kingdom of Judah long after the conquest of Israel by the Assyrians.

that can neither be clearly understood nor controlled....A deplorable condition has surfaced in the social realm that requires some sort of remedial action. The integrity of the social fabric is under attack, and some form of repair work is needed to promote the continuity of social life.²⁴

This trauma has made the world unpredictable, lacking in meaning or safety, “unresponsive to personal needs and interests.”

Individuals lose confidence in their abilities to see the interrelatedness of events, and disturbing questions are raised about the linkage of personal lives with historical circumstances....Under conditions of national trauma, the borders and boundaries between order and chaos, between the sacred and the profane, between good and evil, between life and death become fragile. People both individually and collectively see themselves as moving into uncharted territory. The central hopes and aspirations of personal lives are temporarily put on hold and replaced by the darkest of fears and anxieties. Symbolically, ordinary time has stopped.²⁵

This description begins to evoke the very concerns with good, evil, time, and the fragility of life in an unknown, fearsome new world that characterize apocalypses. Certainly the concerns that derive from national trauma as Neal articulates them above would be an apt description of the existential issues facing the Jews in the sixth century B.C.E., be they in exile in Babylon or left behind in a desolated land.²⁶ As though the lynchpin of the universe had been removed, nothing in the heavens or on the earth could feel stable anymore. The religious order of holy days, Sabbaths, and sacrifices that had tied the ancient Israelites back through the whole of their history and even Creation itself no longer seemed to address the reality around them. God himself apparently had been rendered ineffective, absent, or worse: non-existent. What evil could not be imagined in such a world? What future could possibly lie ahead if the present rendered the past nonsensical?

²⁴ Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, N.Y.: 1998), 7.

²⁵ Neal, *National Trauma*, 5–6.

²⁶ For instance, the terror of national devastation is put in the mouth of God himself in Ezek 7:5–6: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Disaster! An unheard-of disaster is coming. The end has come! The end has come!...Doom has come upon you....The time has come, the day is near; there is panic, not joy, upon the mountains.” God states that the disaster is the result of his wrath and judgment against Israel’s “detestable practices” (Ezek 7:8–9).

Even more acute than the temporal disorientation brought about by this world gone wrong would be the loss of a basic sense of location in the cosmos. Sometimes the catastrophic conditions are such that, like the experience of time, they can dislocate individuals purely on a symbolic or cognitive level. But sometimes, as in ancient Israel, this trauma is compounded or occasioned by the actual displacement from one's home. 'Home' is a master symbol in the human experience so all-encompassing that few fully comprehend what it represents until it is lost or altered in some way. As a word and image, 'home' regularly associates consciously and unconsciously with birth, childhood, family, security, order; arguably it is even a synonym for one's own life and personal identity. Where you live is inextricably tied up with who you are, and those who live with you are in a very real sense part of you as well. Therefore to lose one's home is tantamount to losing oneself, a symbolic death, an emptying of the world of meaning (a state known as 'anomie'—to be 'without a name').

For exactly this reason, national traumas marked by exile, immigration, forced homelessness, and refugee status all immediately create identifiable communities where the symbol of the homeland takes on extraordinarily powerful qualities. Even generations later, the idea of the land left behind can remain one of the most salient forces in the culture—a situation as relevant for many Jews today as during their time in Babylon. This sentiment holds true as well for those facing military occupation, political oppression, or genocide in their homeland, even though they may not be able to leave or escape. The Jews' horrifying witness to the atrocities of Nazi-occupied Europe is testament to this fact. One does not have to leave one's country to lose it.

War and the Culture of Defeat

In treating the events of the Babylonian Exile, the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple (both in 587 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.), and the quashing of any hopes for anything but a tenuous Jewish presence in Judea in the first and second centuries C.E. as an example of national trauma, we should take care to recognize that these tragedies resulted specifically from acts of war, conquest, or military domination. Trauma inflicted by war has its own qualities. Specifically, it creates what Wolfgang Schivelbusch calls a 'culture of defeat.'

Defeat follows war as ashes follow fire. At the heart of both...lies the threat of extinction, a threat that resonates long past the cessation of hostilities.²⁷

That is, on top of the actual deaths inflicted by war, there is the specter of national death, which is equally disorienting, as “nations are as incapable of imagining their own defeat as individuals are of conceiving their own death.”²⁸ The coming to terms with defeat for a nation, as illustrated by the Book of Lamentations and other scripture and articulated by Homans’ comments on symbolic loss, is the functional equivalent of mourning the death of a loved one.²⁹

Mourning for the actual casualties of war is distinct from the collective mourning for the loss of the war, for the defeat. Occasionally they come together in ritual and institutional ways, to be sure, as in official monuments and memorials to war dead and the ceremonies of their dedication. Still, the mourning for one’s country and its ideals, future, and sovereignty recognizes a loss that is essentially symbolic. This relationship between actual and symbolic loss, and the forms mourning takes in reconciling the two, is exactly the thesis at the heart of Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia,” as will be examined in Chapter One. For now, one needs only recognize that on the plain face of things, war and its attendant traumas—homelessness, exile, refugees, political subjugation—are experienced not only as defeats but, symbolically, as the ultimate defeat, as a type social death that is both shared and deeply, painfully personal.³⁰

If such is the case, then the responses to defeat in war that Schivelbusch documents should give us some insight into the Jewish response to the same conditions, including and especially in apocalyptic literature:

Every society experiences defeat in its own way. But the varieties of response within vanquished nations—whether psychological, cultural, or political—conform to a recognizable set of patterns or archetypes that recur across time and national boundaries. A state of unreality—or

²⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan, 2001), 5.

²⁸ Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 6.

²⁹ Saul Olyan underscores the observation that mourning the dead is the paradigm of all other types of mourning in the Hebrew Bible, including collective mourning for disaster (Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 24).

³⁰ For instance, Daniel Merkur explicitly associates the ‘morbidity’ of the Prophet Ezekiel to his status as a deportee from his homeland (“Prophetic Initiation in Israel and Judah,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society* 12 [1988]: 51).

dreamland—is invariably the first of these. The deep and widespread depression caused by lost wars in the age of nationalism is as obvious as the joyous public celebrations of the victorious ones.³¹

This depression, I argue, is not simply a natural turn to despair in hopeless times but represents the persistence in a symbolic sense (or a realm of *fantasy*) of the nation as it once was, in violent contradiction of the world as it actually is. This fantasy is exactly what molds the cultural forms that emerge as a defense against and a coming to terms with the aftermath of war, including myth and its related genre, apocalypse.

What neurosis is to the individual, the creation of myths is to the collective....Such myths (or in the Freudian term, fantasies), arising from frustrated desires for revenge, are the psychological mechanisms for coming to terms with defeat. Moreover, they are not merely neurotic fictions of the imagination but also healthful protective shields or buffer zones—emotional fortresses—against a reality unbearable to their psyche. Their function can be compared to the coagulation of blood and formation of scabs necessary for wounds to heal, or the convalescent world of the sanatorium.³²

With this therapeutic metaphor, I may turn from the reflection of *loss* resulting from war and national trauma in Jewish apocalypse to the promise of *healing, mourning, and recovery* for the culture. To look for healing in apocalypse, I will return to the same place that the texts do. Not surprisingly, what has been lost—Zion—is what is found in these texts. The Zion Apocalypses demonstrate an arc of healing in the visionary's tale. That is, the inception of the apocalyptic vision amidst the seer's grappling with Zion's loss initiates his emotional recovery and that of the social and spiritual community he represents.

Some scholars may hesitate to grant that the scriptural response to national trauma, which acknowledgely belongs to not just a collective but an institutional social structure, is able to reveal much at all about

³¹ Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 10.

³² Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 26. Amos Funkenstein states, "[the] significance of apocalypticism lies not only in the fact that the apocalyptician envisions the end of the world in very vivid images; no less important is the manner in which he proves the veracity of his vision, convinces himself and his community that the end is inevitable and inevitably close. Only with the aid of this distinction can the paradox of apocalypticism be understood—that it enhanced at one and the same time a sense of myth and a sense of history as a distinct unity" (Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 72; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia: Fortress], 23–27; and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984], 144–61).

psychological states of individuals at the time, much less an unconscious effort by people to reestablish the moorings of their society through writing heartrending sacred literature. Sociologist (and son of pioneering psychologist Erik Erikson) Kai Erikson makes a distinction between the effects of national trauma on the collective versus the individual when he says,

[T]raumatic wounds inflicted on individuals can combine to create a mood, an ethos—a group culture, almost—that is different from (and more than) the sum of the private wounds that make it up. Trauma, that is, has a social dimension.³³

Erikson is certainly correct to assert the distinction between individual and collective experiences of trauma. Yet the two are definably related; one might even say ‘congruous’: the emotional contours of pain, anxiety, and sadness found in one reflect in some meaningful way those of the other. Therefore, I assert that it is precisely *because* these texts emerge from a historical context of national trauma that one may treat the personal and the collective as so much of a piece. As it happens, the treatment of traumatic wounds is the same at both levels, what Freud calls, in the title of a 1914 essay, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through.”³⁴ *The International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* states,

Exposure to trauma causes *rupture*, a possible regression, and a state of being ‘stuck’ in this free flow...called *fixity*....Routes to integration may include reestablishing, reliving, and repairing the ruptured systems of survivors and their community and nation, and their place in the international community.³⁵

Neal concurs:

The enduring effects of a trauma in the memories of an individual resemble the enduring effects of a trauma in the collective consciousness.... The conditions surrounding trauma are played and replayed in consciousness

³³ Kai Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1994, 231; quoted in Homans, “Introduction,” 28.)

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through: Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II” (1914), SE 12: 147–56; see especially 154–55.

³⁵ Y. Danieli, ed., *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma* (New York: Plenum, 1998), 7.

through an attempt to extract some sense of coherence from a meaningless experience.³⁶

For both the nation and its residents, "[r]estructuring a self-identity and reestablishing one's place in the broader scheme of human affairs becomes necessary."³⁷ Freud's essay also describes the healing process of mourning that emerges out of the paralyzing state of melancholia, but it does so three years before he addresses these conditions fully in the monograph that bears their names. When one notes how close in time this essay is to "On Transience" as well, a picture of Freud working out in the war years from 1914 to 1917 the pathological and healing mechanisms of mourning in a specific context of national trauma clearly emerges. Society and the self may be afflicted differently, but the root cause is the same—and so is the path to recovery.

Second Temple Judaism managed to achieve exactly this 'restructuring of self-identity' and 'reestablishing one's place' through a new valuation of Torah, the reinstatement of Temple worship, and the subsequent development of a rich culture of interpretation and remembrance that would become their cornerstone as a people in the Diaspora. Still, at the time the Jews would never be long unaware of their subjugation to a foreign empire and their lack of sovereign, Davidic king. Even the new Temple building itself, a shadow of its former glory until Herod's expansion of it, was a constant reminder of what had been lost. Texts that reflect this condition, be they prophecy, poetry, or apocalypse, can usefully be treated as a dynamic intersection between personal and collective experience, where private and shared trauma overlap in one seamless expression of despair and hope. Thus, I theorize that the Zion Apocalypses represent examples of a *collective* trauma worked out in the narrative form of *personal* trauma, reflecting not only key features of both but *precisely* the complex relationship between the two in traumatic times.

³⁶ Neal, *National Trauma*, 5.

³⁷ Neal, *National Trauma*, 4.

*The Apocalyptic Cure**Apocalyptic Illness*

If these apocalypses are somehow a 'symptom' of trauma at a national level, and psychoanalysis is posited as a method of unlocking the pain and dysfunction evidenced in them, then clearly this study must assume apocalyptic literature and the behavior it depicts is 'pathological.' To be sure, scholars have long noted the pathology apparent in apocalypticism and millennialism but have missed the 'healthy' resolution, literarily and theologically, that counterbalances it. Many have impugned the sanity and mental stability of apocalyptic visionaries and their followers. The desire to have a heavenly force wipe clean the unpleasantness of this planet and provide a social utopia for the future was seen as unabashed escapist delusion, an inability or unwillingness to deal with reality 'as it is.' Worse, the bizarre and sometimes violent content of the visions themselves has occasionally been read, in analogy with personal crisis, as parallel to a nervous breakdown or even paranoid schizophrenia, with its delusions of grandeur, persecution, and bizarre, wish-fulfillment universe.³⁸

³⁸ Some examples include: Harold Lasswell, "Collective Autism as a Consequence of Culture Contact: Notes on Religious Training and the Peyote Cult at Taos," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 4 (1936): 232–47; H.B.M. Murphy, "Social Change and Mental Health," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 39 (1961): 385–445; George Rosen, *Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), 9, 191, 223–25; Robert N. Wilson, "Disaster and Mental Health," in *Man and Society in Disaster* (ed. George W. Baker and Dwight W. Chapman; New York: Basic, 1962), 124–50; Bryan Wilson, *Magic and the Millennium* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 317, 327, 337. Norman Cohn makes a subtle reference to pathology in his seminal *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, noting that messianic aspirations come to the fore "again and again" in medieval Europe, "in situations of mass disorientation and anxiety" (Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (rev. and exp. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 15). However, this assessment, from a later edition, apparently is toned down from an earlier stance, which stated, "If one would arrive at an adequate interpretation... one cannot afford to ignore the psychic content of the phantasies which have inspired them. All these phantasies are precisely such as are commonly found in individual cases of paranoia. The megalomaniac view [is] of oneself as the elect, wholly good, abominably persecuted yet assured of ultimate triumph.... But a paranoiac delusion does not cease to be so because it is shared by so many individuals, nor yet because those individuals have real and ample grounds for regarding themselves as victims of oppression" (Cohn, *Pursuit* [1957], 309, quoted in Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* [Southampton, England: Basil Blackwell, 1969], 120–21).

A number of authors have posited a profound sickness or failure to grasp reality for some of the figures central to the texts treated in this study: August Klostermann, Edwin C. Broome, and David Halperin on Ezekiel; R.H. Pfeiffer on 4 Ezra.³⁹ Halperin, in fact, boldly mixes compassion, even admiration, with his assessment of Ezekiel's pathology:

It is hard to contemplate this pathology without revulsion, harder still to imagine so hideous a system of delusion dominating one of the great figures of the Bible.... Yet if it is true that the sickness discussed here has tainted the relations of men and women the world over, it is also true that we are at last learning to crave release from it. Perhaps, in this struggle, Ezekiel may serve as our guide. He was vulnerable as we are; and surely he suffered his disease to a degree beyond that of most humans who have ever lived.⁴⁰

Yet apocalypses reflect no mere individual breakdown or escape from reality. They indicate that, for some, the traditional symbol system of the culture is no longer adequate or stable. They respond to an anxious experience of cultural change by stepping out from the full current of the stream of time, introducing myth, schematization, and utopian ends in an effort to regain a sense of mastery over the meaning of history. A righteous representative of the people participates in a movement played out in a realm free from the harsh realities of the present, and is sometimes himself transformed, as with Enoch, or promised transformation, as with Daniel, or witnesses and enters into transformation, as in 4 Ezra. This resolution for the seer comes part and parcel with the apocalypse's narrative structure. That is, the apocalypses written in the aftermath of the attacks on the Temple project a transformative healing arc, from a state of anxiety and disruption to one of unity, wholeness, and perfection. Their readers may vicariously participate in what scholars have called the 'apocalyptic cure.'

³⁹ August Klostermann, "Ezechiel: ein Beitrag zu besserer Würdigung seiner Person und seiner Schrift," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 50 (1877): 391-439; Edwin C. Broome, "Ezekiel's Abnormal Personality," *JBL* 65 (1946): 277-92; David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993); R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper & Row, 1949), 269.

⁴⁰ Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 5. We may note as well that André LaCocque amusingly reverses the attribution on the part of the Judean sectarians who gave rise to the Book of Daniel: "For them it was a mistake to confuse the current course of history with its normal course. Nothing could have been more abnormal; history had gone mad. Better, it was monstrous" (LaCocque, *Daniel in His Time* [Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988], 107).

For John Collins, author of *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, “The apocalyptic ‘cure’ is effected by reexperiencing and working through the past.”⁴¹ This statement succinctly sums up the inter-relationship between mourning as found in symbolic loss and national trauma and mourning as a theme—and now I may argue, a *function*—of apocalypse. National trauma and symbolic loss represent moments of rupture in the continuity of reality, experienced perhaps most acutely as a disruption of the meaning of a personal or shared history. The only way to overcome this rupture, to mend it, is to face the losses head on, with immediacy, until their place in history is re-assessed and re-ordered. Apocalypses in general and the Zion Apocalypses in particular are structured to achieve this very confrontation with and mastery of the loss. They reproduce in sacred literature the exact psychological mechanisms that allow successful mourning to take place.

Yet we must admit that if apocalypses can ‘cure’ part of a culture, at the same time that part of the culture must be, in some way, ‘ill.’ The type of disorder with which apocalypse might be understood in analogy has been labeled *creative illness*. Freud, prior to writing *The Interpretation of Dreams*, underwent a period of intense self-analysis to deal with a stultifying period of neurotic brooding following his father’s death.⁴² Carl Jung, following his break with Freud, experienced a series of self-proclaimed ‘assaults of the unconscious,’ through which he developed his central psychodynamic insight, the theory of individuation.⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, and other notables all

⁴¹ John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 40; see also Jean-Claude Picard, “Observations sur L’Apocalypse Grecque de Baruch I: Cadre historique fictif et efficacité symbolique,” *Semitica* 20 (1970): 90; this concept is based on Claude Lévi-Strauss’ writings on symbols in relation to psychotherapy. See Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic, 1963), 186–205.

⁴² Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic, 1970), 446–47; see also Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1988), 87–102; and Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (ed. Lionel Trilling and Steven Marcus; New York: Basic, 1961), chapter 14.

⁴³ Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious*, 670–72. Jung documents his experiences and their relationship to his work in the chapters entitled “Confrontation with the Unconscious” and “The Work” in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage, 1965). Significantly, Jung’s exploration of his unconscious, which included an interpretive guide or psychopomp named Philemon who showed Jung the mysteries of his own psyche, bears a striking resemblance to the tours of heaven in apocalyptic literature. Additionally, he recalls an apocalyptic vision of his own just before World War I of a “monstrous flood covering all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps.... I realized that a frightful catas-

endured similar 'breakdowns' before or amidst their 'breakthroughs,' seminal work in modern thought marking a new direction in a field or even the inception of a new field itself. Henri Ellenberger observes:

A creative illness succeeds a period of intense preoccupation with an idea and search for a certain truth. It is a polymorphous condition that can take the shape of depression, neurosis, psychosomatic ailments, or even psychosis....He suffers from feelings of utter isolation, even when he has a mentor who guides him through the ordeal.... *The subject emerges from his ordeal with a permanent transformation in his personality and the conviction that he has discovered a great truth or a new spiritual world.*⁴⁴

Creative illness, then, shares its symptoms with organic, pathological mental illnesses, neuroses, and psychoses. But its root etiology does not derive from something wrong in the mind, but from something wrong in the world which the mind is trying to understand and resolve. In creative illness, attempts are made to bridge the gap between what was and what is by positing new ideas about the important aspects of the world and their interrelationship. This process, obviously, is an act of fantasy in the sense that it creates a picture of how things *should be*, how the individual hopes society *will be*, and expresses it in symbolic form.

So too might we envision apocalypses, as creative products; the visionary experiences the world as radically compromised or changed, which disturbs his own sense of identity in the world.⁴⁵ They make

trophe was in progress. I saw the mighty yellow waves, the floating rubble of civilization, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands. Then the whole sea turned to blood." Like Daniel, Jung was "perplexed and nauseated." When the vision recurred two weeks later, an inner voice told him, "Look at it well; it is wholly real and it will be so. You cannot doubt it" (Jung, *Memories*, 175-76). Jung's vision, occurring at time of serious changes and stressors in his life and in his surrounding culture, almost perfectly reproduces the style and effect of an ancient apocalypse.

⁴⁴ Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious*, 448; emphasis mine.

⁴⁵ J.Z. Smith powerfully describes the effect of social change on the individual: "Each society has moments of ritualized disjunction, moments of 'descent into chaos,' of ritual reversal, of liminality, of collective anomie. But these are part of a highly structured scenario in which these moments will be overcome through the creation of a new world, the raising of an individual to a new status, or the strengthening of the community. Change—in the strongest sense of the word, a society's conversion—is required when such moments meld into history. When the world is perceived to be chaotic, reversed, liminal, filled with anomie. Then man finds himself in a world which he does not recognize; and perhaps even more terrible, man finds himself to have a self he does not recognize. Then he will need to create a new world, to express his sense of a new place" (J.Z. Smith, "The Influence of Symbols on Social Change: A Place

available a means of expressing anxieties, desires, and real pain in the wake of another, recent trauma that has therapeutic possibilities. In this way, apocalypses are not pathological *per se*, but like many creative products that tap into the unconscious workings of perceptive individuals, they both express an unresolved anxiety about the state of existence (of the people, of the culture, of God) and help relieve that anxiety. As texts with an imagined or expected audience, these scriptures could well have been preserved precisely because they so perfectly introduce an imaginative, creative space to readers who shared the sense if not always the experience of cultural loss. A catalytic effect of the Zion Apocalypses as texts of mourning for the culture and, hence, texts of healing is made possible by the interrelatedness of individual desires and available cultural solutions, what some call a 'healing milieu.'⁴⁶ Often a healing milieu represents a place in which participants in a culture can confront frightening new realities and problematic old ones; healing is brought about in many cases by allowing this confrontation to take place and resolve itself in a recognized social medium that still allows thoughts and behaviors that challenge the mainstream.⁴⁷ Thus, the apocalyptic cure, if there is one, comes about when people, alone or together, transform their understanding of the world from longing for an idealized past to a consoling hope for a future in which *both* a new idealism and realism are tenable.

on Which to Stand," in *Map is Not Territory* [Leiden: Brill, 1978], 145–46). Smith's description seems highly *apropos* of apocalypticism; indeed, in the same essay he briefly explores cargo-cults and millennialism in their relationship to cultural change ("Influence of Symbols," 142).

⁴⁶ This interrelationship of culture, individual, and healing, especially in terms of developing an effective cross-cultural model for it, is the subject of a number of good books, including Arthur Kleinman's *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture: An Exploration of the Borderland between Anthropology, Medicine and Psychiatry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) and Sudhir Kakar's *Shamans, Mystics, and Doctors: A Psychological Inquiry into India and its Healing Traditions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982). The net result in these studies is an attempt at translation without reductionism to articulate the relationships among specific ritual acts of healing, the role of a given healer, and the contributions of Western medicine and therapies, including psychoanalysis.

⁴⁷ On prophecy in general as a forum for such encounters, see Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 69–73.

Psychoanalysis: Modernity's Apocalyptic Cure?

As the scientific worldview began to erode away the millennia-old religious culture, religion itself became an object of analysis, and some revolutionary investigators sought to remove it from dominance in its own sphere to submission within the human-empirical sphere. For these figures, the most important of which being Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud, the everyday reality of human interaction was an illusory, distorted manifestation of a latent reality underlying the human condition: the Will to Power, or praxis (political economy), or the unconscious, respectively.⁴⁸ The 'concealed' apocalyptic or millenarian programs of these three—in the sense of an expected radical transformation of human existence by a revelation of the truth of reality—is discernable and related, even if not obvious, in various works.⁴⁹ Like apocalypses, some of these transformations of the social sphere are by nature more democratic (Marx), while some are more elitist (Nietzsche, Freud)—the benefits going to the author's equivalent of the 'righteous' or 'wise' of the ancient texts; obliteration, or at least disempowerment or neurosis, the inexorable consequence for their oppressive foes.

That is to say, like apocalypticism psychoanalysis arose out of a complex environment of personal, social, and cultural loss, for Freud even within a Jewish context. Freud, in fact, often demonstrated clear messianic or prophetic hopes for himself.⁵⁰ He would save humanity from

⁴⁸ The notion that apocalypse and the human sciences have some cultural origins and structural features in common, especially with regard to their evaluation or critique of reality, bears further investigation for each of these radical innovators in modernity (see Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* [trans. D. Savage; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977], 32–35; also, William Newell, *The Secular Magi: Marx, Freud and Nietzsche on Religion* [New York: Pilgrim, 1986]).

⁴⁹ See Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (exp. ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 250–54, 260, 264–93; Daniel Chapelle, *Nietzsche and Psychoanalysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 163; John J. Mardsen, *Marxian and Christian Utopianism: Toward a Socialist Political Theology* (New York: Monthly Review, 1991); and José P. Miranda, *Marx Against the Marxists: The Christian Humanism of Karl Marx* (trans. J. Drury; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1980), 264–84.

⁵⁰ The confluence of social, historical, and biographical conditions in the invention of psychoanalysis comprises the core of Peter Homans' argument in *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989). Jacquy Chemouni examines the depths of Freud's 'messianism,' conscious and unconscious, in *Freud, la Psychanalyse et le Judaïsme: Un Messianisme Sécularisé* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1991).

the distorting illusion of religion and repressed libido with his revelation of the true method of interpreting our inner life and its extension into the social and cultural world. (He articulated this view most openly in 1927's *The Future of an Illusion*—perhaps the closest thing in the Freudian corpus to an apocalyptic vision in its own right.)⁵¹ He even speculated that there might someday be a plaque placed where he had the key dream that unlocked his method of interpretation, reading, “In This House, on July 24th, 1895 the Secret of Dreams was Revealed to Dr. Sigm. Freud.”⁵² Therefore it is all the more fitting that Dr. Freud's system of analysis be brought to bear on the most symbolic and revelatory of Jewish texts, the apocalypses.

Furthermore, as Homans has argued in *The Ability to Mourn: Disillusionment and the Social Origins of Psychoanalysis*, the key to understanding Freud and the agenda of psychoanalysis is to see them both in a very specific, historical context of symbolic and personal loss. Writ large, this loss reflected the disenchantment of the world that came to be known as ‘secularization.’ Secularization, a process of giving up the wishful illusion of faith to the reality principle of scientific inquiry, had been eroding the ideological moorings of Western religion for centuries and engendered in many modern people an inability to mourn the loss of their sacred world, a melancholia over the end of their attachment to God, to which psychoanalysis was a creative, literally therapeutic response.⁵³ At this point, the correspondence between psychoanalysis as a response to Western culture's ‘giving up’ of God in light of external exigencies and the Zion Apocalypses' struggle to reconcile traditional Yahwistic belief with the disappointments of history becomes clear.

The Zion Apocalypses, in fact, resemble products of what Freud calls *Trauerarbeit*, the work of mourning, as attempts to come to terms with and resolve the disruption of a people's culture and identity, when the past is gone yet still more tangible than the present. Psychoanalytic readings of the Zion Apocalypses, then, are not inappropriate and anachronistic applications of a Modernist, individualistic treatment of psychopathology, as critics may charge, but represent a hermeneutic that arose out of an analogous crisis of meaning, with a worldview positing concealed and manifest realities that, *mutatis mutandis*, maps

⁵¹ Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), SE 21: 5–56.

⁵² Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), SE 4: 121 n. 1.

⁵³ Homans, *Ability*, 4–6.

strikingly well upon that of ancient apocalypse. The impact of the loss of Zion on apocalyptic scriptures will be reflected in the ways they play with history and its remembrance, the reimagining of basic Jewish principles in light of the geographical and social settings (Exile, Palestine, or Diaspora) in which authors likely produced them, the vision of the future articulated in the end, and the emotional arc of the seer's story itself. Such an interpretation reads the texts back into their environments and contexts while projecting the healing arc of the seer and his society forward toward the resolution of their mourning that sustains them in the world again.⁵⁴

Chapter One of this study, then, lays out the features of mourning and melancholia as they relate to psychoanalytic theory, symbolic loss, and the structure and content of the Zion Apocalypses. Chapter Two addresses the original trauma, the Babylonian Conquest and Exile, as it affected a figure, Ezekiel, who was likely wholly invested in the worldview represented by the original Temple in Jerusalem. Chapter Three examines 4 Ezra, one of the most powerful apocalypses that followed the destruction of the Second Temple. Ezra's story, while bringing him essentially to the same place as Ezekiel literarily, takes a very different emotional path. Chapter Four treats two apocalypses named for the prophet Jeremiah's scribe Baruch; both exhibit a turning away from the emotional paralysis exhibited in Ezekiel and Ezra toward a real-world acceptance of a world without a Temple. After some concluding observations, I meditate in an epilogue on the implications of this study, which deals with the symbolic loss and national trauma occasioned by the destruction of culturally significant buildings, for the United States immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

For the purposes of this study I will call the unresolved presence of the past and the coalescence of ancient and modern responses to loss in this literature *apocalyptic melancholia*. Applying the psychoanalytic theory of mourning to this set of texts aims for a strategy of explanation and interpretation—a hermeneutic—to understand the way the

⁵⁴ Steven Marcus asserts that the Freudian hermeneutic in general requires it to operate *post hoc*, tracing a symbolic artifact—a symptom, slip of the tongue, dream, etc.—backwards in time through lines of association to the real-world origins of the symbolic content. This process is directly at odds with the predictive and reproducible criteria of scientific theory proper (Marcus, *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis: Studies in the Transition from Victorian Humanism to Modernity* [New York: Norton, 1984], 167).

apocalyptic cure works in each one to manifest and then resolve this melancholia. They each express in unique ways, in both the surface and *sub rosa* layers of the material, mourning for a deep and pervasive loss, then use the past up to and including the destruction of Zion to reassess that past and formulate hope for the future.

Psychoanalytic theory indicates why these visions, their narratives, the specific history alluded to in them, and the emotional tenor of the seer's response are all of a piece. The following chapter will lay out the psychological dynamics of apocalyptic literature and will illustrate why the Zion Apocalypses' recovery of Jewish history centers around the loss and return of Jerusalem and its Temple. In so doing, however, I will develop psychoanalysis's implicit ability to analyze and interpret the symbols and history of *cultures*, especially with regard to these texts' ability to present an alternate reality in which history and even time itself is subject to the creative needs of the apocalyptic author and his audience. As such, the Zion Apocalypses play the exact role they depict Zion itself as doing: they function as monuments erected in fantasy to serve as a focal point around which the work of mourning may be accomplished.

CHAPTER ONE

APOCALYPTIC MELANCHOLIA AND THE TRAUMA OF HISTORY

While there has been a rich and steadily growing body of work that uses the theories and interpretive strategies of the field of psychology to enhance our understanding of Biblical texts, such application still strikes many as a kind of foreign intrusion, an exercise for interlopers and dilettantes at best, an invasion of conquest at worst. Certainly the reputation of ‘psychological Biblical criticism’ has suffered from misguided and ill-prepared efforts by even some of the founders of the field, including Freud and his protégé Carl Jung. Charges of ‘reductionism’ and ‘psychologizing’ are often fair to levy against projects that appear to treat religious belief, experience, and history in ham-fisted ways.¹ Some would even reject outright the notion that modern, Western psychological categories could be applied to peoples of ancient cultures, or that Biblical texts are somehow amenable to psychological interpretation in the same way that a person with an actual mental life is, especially considering all of the questions of redaction, transmission, and cultural borrowing that complicate Biblical scholarship in general.

Yet, as Wayne Rollins and D. Andrew Kille address the point in their respective hallmark works in the field, the enduring spiritual power of the Bible is the best evidence itself of its psychological relevance across time, culture, and literary artifice. Biblical exegesis inherently requires a belief in the continuity between people of a current time and the subjects of Biblical narrative; Christians and Jews alike have turned to scriptural figures as guides in a troubled world for this very

¹ D. Andrew Kille, *Psychological Biblical Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 20. Most infamous among these ‘classic’ treatments surely is Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism* ([1939], SE 23: 3–137). On the other hand, *Answer to Job* (1952; vol. 11 of *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*; trans. R.F.C. Hull; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) remains one of Jung’s most enduring works. On the Bible in Freud’s and Jung’s work, see Wayne Rollins, *Soul and Psyche: The Bible in Psychological Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 33–60.

reason.² In the apocalyptic literature addressed in this study, this is all the more true. Even if most of these texts did not achieve the level of embrace and influence as the Book of Ezekiel, or the Books of Daniel and Revelation for that matter, the explosion of apocalyptic texts and movements at certain times and places (including the early Jewish Diaspora) and the persistence of the apocalyptic mentality through millennia attest to its enduring appeal as a model for comprehending the actions and motivations of others or inspiring one's own. But which features of apocalypse make this identification possible?

Kille indicates three elements of Biblical texts that provide starting points for psychological interpretation: "symbols and archetypal images, psychodynamic factors represented in narrative and discourse, and depictions of biblical personalities."³ All three of these elements are crucial for explicating the psychological dimensions of loss and mourning that we find in the apocalyptic texts. Certainly, they would be justly famous for their startling, uncanny images if nothing else; their enduring power begs them to be taken seriously as creative products that resonate—and motivate—beyond their literal signification or historical referent. Therefore they reflect the work of the unconscious as much as any conscious creative or literary effort. As for narrative, many of the standard features of apocalyptic narrative in general and aspects of them in these texts specifically convey unconscious dynamics of *revealing and concealing* information, *restructuring the memory of the past* to address anxieties about the present and future, positing a alternate reality where disappointments and failures are rectified in a kind of *wish-fulfillment*, and a moving the apocalyptic seer in a healing arc from *trauma* to *recovery*. Finally, so much of the value of apocalyptic literature for its readers through the ages has been in not just what has been revealed but to whom, and in what circumstances, and how the seer responded. For the prophet Ezekiel as well as the apocalyptic texts following the destruction of the Second Temple, the seer's emotional life is laid bare and scrutinized in ways that are noticeably acute for the Hebrew Bible, closer to the searing experiences of Job and Jeremiah than to the acquiescence of Abraham or the reluctant obedience of Moses or Isaiah. Divine revelation in Biblical narrative, prophecy,

² Kille, *Biblical Criticism*, 14; Rollins makes the therapeutic purposes of the Biblical canon a central focus of psychological Biblical interpretation (see especially *Soul and Psyche*, 179–81).

³ Kille, *Biblical Criticism*, 14.

and apocalypses often reports the seer's disturbed emotional state in the wake of his visions. The unifying feature of the Zion Apocalypses, the theme of loss and mourning, is in fact quite overt and distinctive in the depiction of the apocalypticists.

Hence the three entry points into Biblical psychological criticism that Kille presents are evinced in an amplified and deeply integrated way in these texts and other apocalypses. But one might still ask, why Freud? Many recent treatments of Freud and the legacy of psychoanalysis have charged that he was not scientific or even consistent in his own methods.⁴ It has become an article of faith in modern thought that Freud's originative views on women, the incest fantasy, the death instinct, the influence of childhood on adult behavior, and religion, not least of all, consign the entire psychoanalytic edifice to the dustbin of history or, at the very least, departments of cultural studies (whichever is worse to its critics, I suppose). Certainly in the century since *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900, a multiplicity of psychologies has emerged, some building on psychoanalysis and depth psychology, some in outright rejection of all of its assumptions and methods.⁵ Experimental psychology has refined itself as much as possible into an approximation of the physical sciences. In clinical psychology echoes of psychoanalysis's 'talk therapy' remain, but the theoretical underpinnings have given way to behaviorism and cognitive therapies, among many others. Which is not even to mention psychiatric drug therapies—often effective, and in America, typically the only psychological treatments covered by medical insurance. So what place is there for Freud in the modern academic toolbox, let alone in Biblical criticism? I argue that two of Freud's classic insights are irrefutable and offer a basis for the relevance of psychoanalysis for understanding apocalyptic literature.

First, there is an unconscious realm of human thought, where an often chaotic mixture of emotion, experience, memory, imagery, and

⁴ For example, E. Fuller Torrey, *Freudian Fraud: The Malignant Effect of Freud's Theory on American Thought and Culture* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science, and Psychoanalysis* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996); and Frank Cioffi, *Freud and the Question of Pseudoscience* (Peru, IL: Carus, 1998).

⁵ See Kille, *Biblical Criticism*, 29–37, for a thumbnail overview of other psychological methodologies and the benefit of multiple approaches. For a deeper appreciation of the variety of psychologies of religion, see Dian Jonte-Pace and William B. Parsons, *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

language knock against each other, combining and recombining in response to the successes, failures, power dynamics, and connections to others that make up everyday life. The unconscious is, thus, honest about how we truly view the world in a way that our conscious strategies of rationalization, emotional persuasion, and deliberative anticipation of the future are not. Much of our inner experience and what we express to others is a complex amalgam of truths presented in a distorted manner intertwined with clear and rational falsehoods. As it happens, this depiction perfectly describes the worldview of the apocalypse, where the truth is revealed from the sacred world in a distorted way to refute the falsehood of corrupted world around us. This unconsciously determined reality erupts into mundane reality in dream or vision form (or the apocalyptic seer is translated into the heavenly realm for its direct experience, often by the same means). As in actual dreams and visions, we encounter in the breakthrough of divine into earthly reality the confrontation of a latent, hidden, extremely powerful, symbolic reality with manifest, ordinary reality.⁶ The symbolic nature of the material not only reveals the divine mysteries hidden

⁶ Several authors attempt to set criteria for ‘authentic visions,’ of which Daniel Harlow (*The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch [3 Baruch] in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 19–20) provides a succinct review, here summarized. Johannes Lindblom posits eight qualities of a genuine vision: spontaneity, conciseness, dream-like character, freshness and lack of sophistication, concern for other-worldly realities, inexpressibility, emotional side effects, and the specification of date and locality of the vision (Lindblom, *Gesichte und Offenbarungen: Vorstellungen von göttlichen Weisungen und über-natürlichen Erscheinungen im ältesten Christentum* [Lund: Gleerup, 1968], 219). Christopher Rowland, with some caveats, adds to these the further meditation on scripture itself, as in 4 Ezra 6, Dan 9, and possibly 1 En. 14, which may be a meditation on Ezek 1 (Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Christianity* [New York: Crossroad, 1982], 214–22). David Halperin, however, rejects these formulations, as well as “the dichotomy between ‘real’ and ‘literary,’ in favor of a distinction between consciously created fantasy and unconsciously generated hallucination,” whereby he stakes a claim to authenticity through interpretability (Halperin, “Heavenly Ascension in Ancient Judaism: The Nature of the Experience,” SBLSP 1987: 218–32, quoted in Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 20). For his part, Dan Merkur believes that there is “evidence neither of daydreams nor of dreams, but of an alternate psychic state that combined features of both: a waking dream state that permitted limited conscious control of unconsciously originating materials” (Merkur, “The Visionary Practices of the Jewish Apocalypticists,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society* 14 [1989]: 130–31). For the purposes of this study, it is not so important that the Zion Apocalypses sprung forth wholly-formed from the heads of their authors, so to speak, but that they are concerned with other realities, there is a strong emotional component to their concern that could resonate with others, and that they use these analytically favored forms—dreams, vision, one-on-one interpretation—to explore the issues they raise.

from humanity, but it serves to conceal them in the same act. This same paradox philosopher Paul Ricoeur notes in the dual function of dream symbolism in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*; that is, to introduce unconscious knowledge to conscious thought while displacing, condensing, inverting, and otherwise disguising it.⁷ Furthermore, the nature of truly living symbols, both on a personal level and those utilized in day-to-day cultural discourse, is to represent an object and to obscure it at the same time, to *reveal and conceal*. Concealment, as the Freudian hermeneutic sees it, is the defensive result of repression; so those features of revelation that are to remain hidden are likely to contain the most dangerous truths one might encounter. In classical Freudian psychoanalysis, the incest and patricide taboos are the horrors that repression serves to hide; these wishes must be repressed and hidden from consciousness in order for an individual to mature and live in society.

The second insight concerns love as attachment—not to a person, but to the idea, image, or symbol we have of that person. One does not have to affirm Freud's metapsychology, where the id, ego, super-ego push psychic energy or 'libido' around, to recognize the insight in his descriptions of the neurotic effects of love and the fear of losing it. It is commonplace for people to transfer or displace the emotions they have invested in one person or thing onto another without realizing or acknowledging it, and that they hold onto the idea of the loved 'object,' as Freud puts it, long after it has passed out of their life for whatever reason. But because of the dynamics of the unconscious, that they are doing this remains opaque to them, even if it is perfectly obvious to everyone around them. The repression of such discomfiting knowledge of what is lost and which love has ended is precisely what makes the unconscious such a frightening and, yes, apocalyptic psychic reality to expose.

Still, perhaps the best case for utilizing Freudian theory for ancient apocalyptic literature can be made by looking at the form, content, and function of the literature itself. David Aune presents the apocalyptic genre thusly:

- (1) *Form*: an apocalypse is a prose narrative, in autobiographical form, of revelatory visions experienced by the author, so structured that the central revelatory message constitutes a literary climax, and framed by a

⁷ Ricoeur, *Freud*, 497.

narrative of the circumstances surrounding the revelatory experience(s). (2) *Content*: the communication of a transcendent, often eschatological, perspective on human experience. (3) *Function*: (a) to legitimate the transcendent authorization of the message, (b) by mediating a new actualization of the original revelatory experience through literary devices, structures and imagery, which function to 'conceal' the message which the text 'reveals,' so that (c) the recipients of the message will be encouraged to modify their cognitive and behavioral stance in conformity with transcendent perspectives.⁸

In much of this paragraph Aune could easily be talking about psychological phenomena such as dreams or neurotic symptoms: (1) describes the focus of the clinical encounter; (2) parallels Freud's emphasis on the primacy of unconscious materials, which are not directly accessible; (3) instantiates the therapist's authority in dealing with these materials, in the form in which they are presented, to aid the change in perspective this act of self-knowledge intends to initiate. In these ways Aune somewhat unwittingly draws the connection between the psychoanalytic and the apocalyptic stances on the interpretation of reality, the very connection I wish to elucidate and illustrate in this study.

The Apocalyptic Unconscious

According to *Mishnah Hagigah* 2:1, speculation on knowledge in four areas threatens danger worse than death: what is above, what is beneath, what was beforetime, and what will be hereafter. This prohibition is directed, at least in part, against curiosity regarding apocalyptic texts and matters.⁹ The relevance of 'the above' and 'the beneath' is obvious in apocalyptic texts. From the vaunted perspective of the divine arena, the secrets of the earth and heavens both may be unveiled. The power of divine reality immediately supersedes that of the earth; equally, new truths supersede old ones, dispelling them as illusory. In effect, the authority of the heavenly revelation and the new knowledge that revelation imparts displace the location of 'true' reality from earth to heaven. Even the nature and purpose of existence can no longer remain contingent on earthly events and traditional understandings of the Jewish relationship to God. The apocalyptic text is disruptive

⁸ David Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and the Problem of Genre," *Semeia* 36 (1986): 95.

⁹ See Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 75–76.

and represents a serious critique of the Judaic worldview, intended to express a more 'accurate' and authoritative stance.

In short, what apocalypticism offers is an *unmasking of reality*—showing believers that the reality they experience is not 'true' reality; and fueling the hope for (and possibly the vicarious experience of) the symbolic transformation of the world to match the divine reality that the text reveals.¹⁰ With this shift in mind, a Freudian approach becomes especially interesting if apocalyptic texts are regarded as descriptions of movements from manifest to latent knowledge; that is, from consciousness to the unconscious. While the content and realm of ideal existence in apocalypse certainly differ from that of the Freudian unconscious, structurally there is much to compare. They both represent a paradigm shift, a re-evaluation of one worldview from the reference-point of another which exists beyond it, upon which the first, and the understanding thereof, is contingent. This other world remains hidden from yet fundamentally influential in human experience. Revealed in forms that are disruptive to normal experience, its appearance calls for interpretation. In most of the Hebrew Bible divine and human worlds are not so radically separated, but in apocalypse, there exists a qualitative chasm between the two realms. Heaven and the divine purpose on earth are so distant and inaccessible that it takes a special occurrence of revelation, followed by explanation, to bridge the gap for human consciousness.¹¹ For Freud, the exemplary disruption from the unconscious is the dream, but it may occur as jokes, fantasies, art, or symptoms of neuroses. Moreover, "every dream [is] linked in its manifest content with recent experiences and in its latent content with the most ancient experiences."¹² Awareness of how repressed desire shapes personal experience and history is the condition for receipt of unconscious knowledge.

The Freudian hermeneutic, then, in the movement from the 'below' of consciousness and manifest representation to the 'above' of latent, unconscious content, also is a matter of 'what was beforetime' in the individual's personal history—which is to say *memory*. But the

¹⁰ Christopher Rowland, "The Apocalypse: Hope, Resistance and the Revelation of Reality," *Ex Auditu* 6 (1990): 129; D. Barr, "The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis," *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 39.

¹¹ See Ithamar Greunwald, "Jewish Apocalypticism to the Rabbinic Period," *ER* 1:336–42.

¹² Freud, *Dreams*, 218.

creative, problem solving, or anticipatory aspect of dreams' symbolic function also indicates that dreaming is just as much about 'what will be hereafter.'¹³

Apocalypses and dreams depend heavily on narrative to convey their import, as does the articulation of many other important cultural forms, such as myth, epic, and history. Here, though, our concern is for the narrative form of the seer's experience, which is often told autobiographically, in the first person, or at least puts his emotional life at its center.¹⁴ As it happens, the clinical psychoanalytic relationship begins with personal biography, namely the projective transference of one person's psychological issues in the course of telling that life story. Classical psychoanalysis, at root, depends on the analysis of this transference, the guided deconstruction of the narrative by a figure now within it. The goal is to help the analysand gain a critical perspective on his or her life, especially the ways various people and events relate to each other in it, resulting in an individual who can better negotiate the demands of the world.¹⁵ The method by which this goal is achieved, in clinical practice, is psychoanalytic interpretation.

The Interpretation of 'Hidden Things'

"Interpretation is a movement from the manifest to the latent. To interpret is to displace the origin of meaning to another region," Paul Ricoeur argues concerning psychoanalysis.¹⁶ A brief passage from Michael Fishbane on prophetic/eschatological interpretation (*peshet*) of scripture in the Qumran library suggests the relationship between apocalyptic and psychoanalytic interpretation. He states,

[T]he sectarians believed that the 'hidden things' constituted a *new* revelation of interpretations of the Law....It was thus not the 'revealed' things alone which had authority over sectarian practice, but the ancient

¹³ See Ricoeur, *Freud*, 91–92.

¹⁴ For a caution, however, against conflating texts' authors with their depiction of the apocalyptic seers, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 105–6.

¹⁵ As stated by Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* (trans. Kathleen Blamey; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 162. Significantly, Ricoeur specifically points to narrative's role in 'mourning for oneself' as one comes to terms with death and one's own end. Narratives of the end, of course, characterize apocalypses to a great degree, and it is the thesis of this study that such narratives do indeed perform the work of mourning and of re-evaluating one's—and one's culture's—past and identity.

¹⁶ Ricoeur, *Freud*, 91.

revelations as understood through the inspired interpretation of its 'hidden' sense.¹⁷

Fishbane also indicates that at Qumran the true meaning of the scriptural prophecies were presumed not to be known to the original speakers.¹⁸ Psychoanalysis, likewise, asserts that the true meanings of unconsciously-motivated creations and actions are unknown to individuals until they are interpreted.

A divine mediator, or *angelus interpres*, appears sometimes prior to a dream or vision to announce it, and sometimes after it at the behest of the visionary; occasionally, the mediator is God himself. In any case, this figure's main function is to interpret the experience and relate it to the events of history that have necessitated it. As such, we note the parallels between the role of the *angelus interpres* and that of the psychoanalyst. The concepts of 'interpretation' and 'dreaming' of course have their own specific senses in the ancient Near East, which should not be overlooked. Yet even as we delve into their ancient cultural meanings, the psychoanalytic analogies emerge more precisely; namely, in the ways in which both consider the crucial secrets of reality to be unlocked by means of the authoritative interpretation of symbols.

'Wise men' (*maškîlîm*), often associated with scribes in the Judaic tradition, sought to comprehend the 'mystery' of human history and the cosmological order itself.¹⁹ Martin Hengel suggests that at this

¹⁷ Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra* (ed. M.J. Mulder; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 364.

¹⁸ Fishbane, "Mikra at Qumran," 373. See, for example, *Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab), in which the Teacher of Righteousness is said to interpret the Prophet Habakkuk, who unwittingly foretold what would happen during the times of the Qumran community in the second century B.C.E.

¹⁹ Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 210–18. In Second Temple literature, elements of a worldview beyond the scope of priestly consideration was emerging; at the same time, High Priests appear to have been actively willing to engage in the expanding economic and political opportunities of the Persian, then Hellenistic empires at a rapid pace, perhaps more so than much of the rest of society (cf. 1 and 2 Macc). To the Levites involved with the scribal activities of the Temple, some say, fell the task of adapting tradition to the new world environment. One may argue then that not only the transmission of culture and tradition but also its creation was a scribal province, informed by the most auspicious of wisdom sources in Judea, Babylon, Persia, and elsewhere yet informing the thinking of a broad segment of Judaic society (Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 78–79; Smith, *Palestinian Parties*, 116–18). Fishbane notes, "The inevitable alliance between these priests and scribes who were (also) the custodians of the *traditum* would have stimulated a cross-fertilization leading to true exegesis" (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], 84). Their approach

time “prophetic consciousness and the learning acquired by wisdom were now inseparably intertwined. *The wise men acquired prophetic features, and the prophets became inspired wise men.*”²⁰ It is no coincidence that many apocalyptic visionaries are themselves represented as scribes: Enoch, Ezra, Baruch. Daniel is a *maškil* who participates in the Babylonian court functions, which could include scribal activities. The unity of concerns throughout the Book of Ezekiel may have been extended or reinforced by a school of followers who transferred the prophet’s experiences to the written page, then introduced their own interpretations and additions in the scribal editing process (see Chapter Two).

Apocalypses’ concern with secrecy and revealing secret knowledge, P.R. Davies argues, is a clear indicator of the concerns of the community associated with them. Secrets “mean power; they also potentially define a group, namely, those who are privy to the secret.”²¹ The symbol of the secret may be a sociological marker related to a perceived decline; that is, a loss. But the decline is seen as external to the group, concerning the control of history and mastery of the cosmos by the Jewish God. The secret is that such a decline is patently false if one knows how to ‘read the signs’; it is a misreading of the world.

Yet in the apocalyptic visions, ‘mysteries’ are no longer certain matters subject to interpretive inquiry or divination, rather *all of reality* is a mystery; the whole of the cosmos and history is distorted and corrupt and therefore needs revelation and interpretation. Along with

to interpretation eventually became circumspect with regard to Jewish tradition and to the Temple itself: its history, its significance, its current administration, its future. For this reason, scribal activity and its development of the wisdom traditions of Jewish, Persian, Hellenistic, and other cultures are commonly regarded as some of the essential facilitating elements in the rise of apocalyptic literature in ancient Judaism (Collins, *Imagination*, 30; J.Z. Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” *Religious Syncretism in Antiquity* [ed. B.A. Pearson; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1975], 70–87; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 202–18; LaCocque, *Daniel*, 31–34).

²⁰ Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 206; emphasis in original. For example, in the first half of the Book of Daniel, Daniel is appointed chief of the ‘mystery specialists,’ the wise men of Babylon, and through the revelations of God, he not only performs more capably at this function than the others, he is “found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems,” but he is not a diviner (A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956], 239).

²¹ P.R. Davies, “Reading Daniel Sociologically,” in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (ed. A.S. van der Woude; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 357. Davies suggests a courtier elite in decline, which could include scribes.

God, reality has become more removed from human understanding, its meaning more ineffable. Ultimately even its revelation must be concealed in symbol; even the interpretation offered remains somehow veiled. John Collins observes,

By means of symbolism, the visions convey a sense of mystery, which is not dispelled by the angelic interpretations. The fact that these visions are interpreted by an angel underscores their transcendent character: they are beyond the power of human interpretation.²²

Daniel's apocalypticism translates the mystery of the cosmic and historical order itself into riddles, dreams, and secret writings.²³ André LaCocque makes the connection between dreams, visions, history, apocalypse, and the unconscious explicit:

Dream is the writing on the 'plaster' of the unconscious. Vision is the writing on the hidden face of history. The secret of history—the object of the apocalyptic quest, the goal of true wisdom and of true prophecy—it is the 'unconscious' of history.²⁴

Apocalypse, as 'true' reality hidden from earthly existence, displaces the origin of the meaning of events in the world from the world itself to a realm of supra-human control and authority, whence the meaning is revealed again to a worthy human representative.

However, in the distance between human and other-worldly experience, something is lost in the translation. Either an interpretive figure or method, or both, are required to complete the revelation process. Ricoeur calls Freud's method of interpretation (as well as those of those other critics of religion, Marx and Nietzsche) the 'hermeneutics of suspicion,' which, he says, should be in dialectic with a recovery of

²² John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 55.

²³ Daniel complains after the interpretation of the vision in ch. 8, "I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding" (Dan 8:27b). Contrary to prophetic visions, which were meant to be clearly understood so their message would be quickly and effectively disseminated, the very symbols that convey its meaning obscure Daniel's apocalyptic visions, and even the interpretation provided resists clarity. In fact, the sense of these revelations as 'mysteries' pervades them to the point that these visions, in the text, are for Daniel's eyes only. See Edith McEwan Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and the Shepherd of Hermas* (JSPSS 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 151, on the phenomenon in a broad range of apocalyptic literature.

²⁴ LaCocque, *Daniel*, 135; emphasis in original; cf. 31.

meaning or 'hermeneutics of retrieval.'²⁵ The same may be said for apocalyptic interpretation: suspect the manifest world, but only by such criteria that its meaning may be authoritatively restored from without. Reading the Zion Apocalypses through the psychoanalytic lens of mourning accomplishes both interpretive tasks.

Mourning and Melancholia

In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud defines mourning as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on."²⁶ When gone, the idea and ideals of one's nation, God, and vocation are subject to mourning and produce the same psychological effects associated with the loss of a loved one. When a loss represents the end of a worldview or cultural symbol system—the cornerstone of reality as one experiences it—psychoanalytically speaking, the *world is empty*.²⁷ But the lost, loved symbol or 'object' is not simply abandoned. Unconsciously the loved object remains unchanged, but consciousness of the reality of the loss threatens this illusion.

Reality-testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object. This demand arouses understandable opposition—it is a matter of general observation that people never willingly abandon a libidinal position, not even, indeed, when a substitute is already beckoning to them. This opposition can be so intense that a turning away from reality...and a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis [takes place].²⁸

Freud emphasizes that this turn from reality towards wishful illusion is a defense, a way to control and master the disappointments imposed on the ego from without. The effects of this 'hallucinatory wishful psychosis,' this turn away from reality, are not static or necessarily positive for the memory of the loved object. They may include the decimation and/or idealization of it in memory; reworking its place in the past to change the object's significance at the present or one's expectations for

²⁵ Ricoeur, *Freud*, 28–36.

²⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), SE 14: 243.

²⁷ Freud, "Mourning," 246.

²⁸ Freud, "Mourning," 244.

it in the future; and the use of dreams or other unconscious, spontaneous forms of creativity (such as hallucinations of the lost love, obsessive thoughts, or physiological symptoms) for the work this process requires.²⁹ The process of mourning, as a *process*, is forward looking; it moves the mourner along an arc of understanding from a realization of just what had been expected from this love (and the world that produced it), to a realization that those expectations will now never come to pass, to the ultimate realization that one will be able to find love and to trust in the world again.

In mourning the illusion dissipates as reality-testing continues to evaluate the external world and the attachment is withdrawn over time; it takes place 'bit by bit.' Sometimes, however, the memory of the loved object attains an almost impenetrable grip on the psychic life of the individual. Such is the state of melancholia. Freud makes the distinction between mourning and melancholia at the conscious versus unconscious awareness of the loss. Specifically, in melancholia, the full extent of the loss is not known or not recognized.

This, indeed, might be so even if the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him.³⁰

In Freud's determination, melancholia involves the withdrawal of vital aspects of the loss from consciousness. In effect, a dual loss occurs; the first of the object, the second of the conscious experience of the original loss. Whereas in mourning, the world is empty, in melancholia, the *self* is—and in its place appears the resurrected, idealized love.³¹

²⁹ Researcher Agneta Grimby found in one study that half of grief-stricken spouses or partners felt the illusion of the presence of their lost loved one; one-third hallucinated to the point of seeing, hearing, or talking to the deceased (Grimby, "Bereavement among Elderly People: Grief Reactions, Post-Bereavement Hallucinations and Quality of Life," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 87 [2007]: 72–80). See also Vaughn Bell, "Ghost Stories: Visits from the Deceased," *Scientific American*, n.p. (cited 15 June 2009). Online: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=ghost-stories-visits-from-the-deceased>.

³⁰ Freud, "Mourning," 245; emphasis in original.

³¹ Technically, Freud speaks not of the self but of the *ego* ('*das Ich*,' Freud, "Mourning," 256). Generally speaking, Freud conceived of the *ego* as a much more circumscribed psychological entity than how we commonly think of the self, which designates a kind of 'core being' or authentic personality. In outlining the effects of melancholia on one's inner life, however, Freud seems to be describing a 'self' rather than the much less all-encompassing 'ego.' Melancholia is an affliction of loss at the core of being, demonstrating a "narcissistic type of object-choice" (Freud, "Mourning," 250).

The hallucinatory re-emergence of the lost attachment Freud terms *the return of the repressed*, and the tendency to revisit the loss for the purpose of re-experiencing its return he calls *the compulsion to repeat*.

While any mourning evinces a delay between a loss and its psychological acknowledgment, melancholia is defined by it. In other words, melancholia represents the *inability* to mourn. This interruption of the negotiation between inner fantasy and outer reality exhibits a distinct symptomology:

a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment.³²

These emotions arise from the anxious and ambivalent nature of loss which is apparent also in mourning but manifest in an unyielding way here. The object is loved, but the withdrawal of the attachment to it occasions harsh resentment and even defensive fantasies of the object's destruction.³³

Loss closely associated with society at large, as in a national trauma, can even be more acute and devastating. Homans says,

Clinically, the ability to mourn is a response to a loss that can be remembered and worked through in memory over time. On the other hand, a loss that is traumatic does not permit this work of mourning to take place; rather, all such efforts only take the form of repetition.... In mourning, existing structures are activated; in trauma, those structures do not exist and must be brought into existence by a different kind of work.³⁴

The traumatized must evaluate the truth and efficacy of tradition and traditional practices against reality as it now stands. If the culture at large can offer an appropriate and satisfying response, mourning may be completed and the loss integrated with the past. If it can offer none, or if the reality of the loss is so great that it must be defensively suppressed or misrepresented, a melancholic response will be evoked for the individuals and the societies they comprise. The culture will unwittingly be compelled to return to the event of the loss and repeat it in ways it can only barely understand, causing disintegrating

³² Freud, "Mourning," 244.

³³ Freud, "Mourning," 251, 256–57.

³⁴ Homans, *Ability to Mourn*, 27.



Figure 2: “Melencholia I.” Albrecht Dürer, 1514.

and disorienting aftershocks for generations. Wolfgang Schivelbusch observes that “defeated nations look for connections with history to provide a point of orientation. Anchoring one’s defeat within the tradition of history’s great losers offers both meaning and consolation.”³⁵ As a major cultural crisis disrupts the viability and credibility of tradition, it inflicts a loss of symbolic structure on many individuals bound by that tradition. A loss of cosmic and social meaning occurs, and a loss of identity. The suspension of identity can be a terrible and destructive state, but it can also serve as a space for serious creativity (see figure 2).

Fantasy, Projection, and Heavenly Reality

The positive side of the disappearance of structure is called by anthropologists such as Victor Turner ‘liminality’ and by post-Freudian psychologists such as D.W. Winnicott ‘transitional space,’ but which for our purposes here we will simply term *fantasy*.³⁶ In apocalypse, the focus away from harsh, earthly, everyday reality towards a symbol-laden, idealized, otherworldly type of existence indicates that on some primary level, this existence is a fantasy, to a large part structured by unconscious needs and imbued with unconscious content. The reality of fantasy is not challenged directly by external contingencies; it in fact fills in the gaps of meaning and satisfaction encountered in the world.³⁷ Fantasy figures as an essential aspect of human life at the personal and cultural levels, for it is in its location between subjectiv-

³⁵ Schivelbusch, *Culture of Defeat*, 29.

³⁶ D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 1971), 1–25. Winnicott is hardly the only theorist to derive a theory of culture from Freud’s writings. In *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), Herbert Marcuse makes the case for a civilization based not on the repression of erotic instincts, but on their acknowledgment and expression, following Freud’s hope in *The Future of an Illusion* (SE 21: 5–56). But then he asserts, “Imagination envisions the reconciliation of the individual with the whole, of desire with realization, of happiness with reason. While this harmony has been removed into utopia by the established reality principle, *phantasy insists that it must and can become real, that behind the illusion lies knowledge*” (Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 143; emphasis mine). Marcuse’s suggestion that there is ‘real’ knowledge ‘behind’ the illusion provided by the fantasy (providing both the illusion and the knowledge, that is), and that such a state is brought about by a utopian resolution of the conflict between desire and reality, anticipates the environment of apocalyptic creativity in fantasy that I assert allows for cultural mourning and the particular structure of these texts that reflects the experience of loss and the process of consolation.

³⁷ Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 14.

ity and objectivity that both inner and outer realities or identities are created. Thus when new events in one's life represent such a radical change in the expected course that one's identity is seriously threatened on a personal and/or communal level, an individual can, even unconsciously, resort to the unchallenged realm of fantasy to preserve the identity as it existed while allowing adaptive changes to be incorporated into it in light of the new situation.³⁸

Furthermore, the analysis of fantasy offers something of a methodological solution to the problem of interpreting cultural products with an individualistic theory. In the traditional analytic model, the patient's fantasy life is the subject of the therapist's psychoanalytic interpretation. The science of projective testing shows that fantastic creations have a consistent symbolic logic that can be interpreted on its own.

As a psychological mechanism, projection involves the unconscious, external re-creation of the inner emotional-symbolic complex, particularly surrounding issues of conflict, ambivalence, and anxiety.³⁹ Implicit in fantasy projection is the need to make coherent sense of ambiguous situations by structuring inner and outer worlds in narrative. Projective tests (such as the Rorschach or the Thematic Apperception Test) present a subject with an ambiguous, unstructured stimulus. The subject, says Homans,

responds to the unconscious sense of loss which the test situation imposes by beginning to tell a story, for the figures which he perceives are always 'doing things'....In sum, the psychology of the perception and construction of movement asks that one link together the phenomenon of fantasy activity, the environing world of social force and form, and the work of narrative building. When taken together in this way, these processes constitute the nucleus of the creation of meaning.... This activity or work might also be called the construction of symbols.... Put in yet another way, in constructing movement, [the subject] is creating a meaningful illusion.⁴⁰

In short, ambiguity triggers projection. It indicates a lack, a loss, an incompleteness in the information from the external world. A suggestion of data exists, but the mind is left to fill in the gaps with what

³⁸ Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 24, 95–103

³⁹ Homans, *Ability to Mourn*, 332–33.

⁴⁰ Homans, *Ability to Mourn*, 332–33; see also Henry Murray, *The Analysis of Fantasy: The Thematic Apperception Technique in the Study of Personality* (New York: Wiley, 1956).

it expects, based on past experience, and with what it wishes, based on its own needs and lacks. It completes the world by an act of creation, be it an out-of-place emotional response, a somatic symptom, a daydream, a work of art—or a religious vision. The cosmos is, by its nature, incomplete and ambiguous to the human mind; fundamental questions of life and death have no immediately apparent answers. This is never truer than in the wake of a disorienting trauma.

Given the traumatic settings assumed for the Zion Apocalypses, certain patterns of fantasy projection that strongly parallel the unconscious dynamics posited for mourning and melancholia are noteworthy. For one, the rage associated with the traumatic loss is at first directed onto innocent or at least inappropriate targets. Rather than their Babylonian or Roman conquerors or even the God who is the master of all events on earth, the apocalypticists blame themselves, the survivors of Exile, or even their fellow Jews back into the ancestral past. Their community and its history are unfairly characterized as ‘ideally bad.’ By the same token, as the work of mourning proceeds, many aspects of the past, once vilified in this way, are recast as ‘ideally good.’ The Jewish community is the beneficiary of this psychological reversal in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, but no aspect of the projection of apocalyptic wish-fulfillment is transformed to the extent that the images of Zion, Jerusalem, and the Temple are.

Apocalypse, in the mourning model, is a fantasy response to the whole complex of losses associated with the destruction of ‘Zion’ and its concomitant worldview, including and especially the loss of the people’s security in their beliefs about the future. The uncertainty of the world situation necessitates a transitional space—i.e., the heavenly realm in apocalypses—that allows for fantasy activity that ‘plays’ with reality, as Winnicott would describe it, inventing a worldview that responds to the ambiguity of the cosmos. Homans describes the work of fantasy in such an environment:

[It] is a response to object loss. But I add to it a second component, the way in which fantasy activity also facilitates the activity of what can be called ‘object gain’—*the formation of new structures of appreciation*....[Fantasy] activity could also be an attempt to return to that reality by constructing a creative relation to it without necessarily denying the ungratifying character of reality.⁴¹

⁴¹ Homans, *Ability to Mourn*, 333; emphasis mine.

The revelation of heavenly reality and especially of the concrete symbol of the New City or Temple is quite literally an 'object gain' that is a 'new structure of appreciation.' This recovery of structure in apocalypses applies not only to space but also to time.

Remembering, Repeating, and Working-through History

This return to the lost reality, in the Zion Apocalypses, generally incorporates the inescapable presence of the past and also some particular use of history. Most noticeably in this regard, in apocalypse the passage of time is arrested, determined, and controlled by God in his omnipotence. History is predestined and periodicized; many apocalyptic visions demonstrate the fact the cosmos has not succumbed to chaos by illustrating that the plan for history has been in place since Creation. This uncompromising control, seen in psychological terms, is related to the need for mastery and stability. Events are set; nothing, even the trauma, is unexpected anymore, no new vulnerabilities are exposed. On the other hand, this kind of imagined power over events also re-establishes an initial investment of basic trust (to use Erik Erikson's term) in the world from which security and, subsequently, a new identity, may be constructed. The use of determined time in apocalyptic narratives reflects the rigorous inflexibility of the melancholic state, but also the work of mourning.

In the end, the Zion Apocalypses allow mourning finally to take place bit by bit in the real world by encouraging the repetition fantasy of the idealized past *cum* idealized future, or in the apt phrase from German scholarship, *Urzeit wird Endzeit*, "The Beginning-time becomes the Endtime."⁴² For all its prophetic focus on the future, Jewish apocalypticism frequently looks backward. The famous historical prophecies of Daniel are, in fact, *vaticinia ex eventu* reviews; the convention of pseudepigraphy allows the writings to be attributed to righteous men centuries earlier. Apocalyptic visionaries frequently place Israel's 'history of treachery' towards YHWH and betrayal of the Mosaic covenant under their magnifying lenses; they also pine for certain traditions reflective of the 'True Israel' and pure Yahwism

⁴² See Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895).

as it (ostensibly) once was practiced. And sometimes in obvious ways, sometimes more indirectly, apocalypses make reference to recent events, their creators using history as it unfolds as grist for their visions. The destruction of Jerusalem would be the historical event *par excellence* in this regard. For this reason, the Zionistic Temple/City complex becomes the apocalyptic *axis mundi*, uniting in these visions not only heaven and earth but also past, present, and future. Freud would call Zion ‘overdetermined,’ meaning that it is the nexus of an almost irreducible web of conscious and unconscious associations.⁴³ Special analytic attention must be paid, then, to the many layers of meaning—manifest, latent, individual, collective—that obtain in this one image.

Monuments, Memory, and Mourning

In the Zion Apocalypses the time of the Babylonian Conquest, as a whole, is construed as a turning point of history, but it is the *image* of the ruined Temple or the city of Jerusalem that becomes representative of the period and paradigmatic for future generations. In national trauma the affected part of the culture sometimes seems to be stuck at the time of the disaster, returning to it always, unable to address new challenges as long as this event is central in people’s thoughts—a self-reinforcing tendency. Thus a country’s most significant and symbolic buildings become in popular imagination touchstones or *monuments* to the lost country, while their actual ruins are transformed into its gravestones or *memorial*. The tension in these apocalypses between the physical destruction of the City and Temple and their symbolic perfection reflects the reality of the trauma they represent while mitigating the full force of the loss, even as it is perpetuated for generations, centuries, even millennia.⁴⁴

⁴³ Freud, *Dreams*, 283.

⁴⁴ The transmission of trauma across generations at the individual, national, and cultural levels is well-documented. Even in their more empirical forms, studies of this phenomenon largely support the approach and assumptions of the psychoanalytic approach to apocalypse, especially with regard to the fixity of the past in the present and the need to recover a vision for the future over time. See Danieli, *Legacies of Trauma*, 7; Peter Shabad, “Repetition and Incomplete Mourning: The Intergenerational Transmission of Traumatic Themes,” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 10 (1993): 61–75; and several examples in Ellen Zinner and Mary Beth Williams, eds., *When a Community Weeps: Case Studies in Group Survivorship* (Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, 1999).

Homans discusses the role of monuments in collective and individual experiences of mourning in his introduction to *Symbolic Loss: The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End*:

Monuments are probably as old and as ubiquitous as the experience of mourning, which may explain why the two are routinely associated with each other. Traditionally, the monument has been the material structure around which both personal and collective mourning 're-presents' a past event and serves as a carrier of memory back through time to that event. Through this process, memory of an earlier experience of loss is assuaged and rendered, or rerendered, less stressful.⁴⁵

Significantly, Homans determines that other socially shared creative products that deal with the past (and future) in a persistently 'present' medium, such as film, religious ritual, and 'certain forms of literature,' are the 'functional equivalents' of these monuments.⁴⁶

It is hardly a stretch to see the Zion Apocalypses as serving exactly this commemorative function. *Apropos* of the literature of the current study, 4 Ezra and the Baruch apocalypses each begin with the visionary recollecting the devastation of the Holy City. Ezekiel sees its graphic destruction by YHWH's host in a premonitory vision, then envisions the Temple's and City's heavenly replacement on earth years later, marking the redemption of God's people. Even in a text that lies outside of the scope of our study where the imagery of the Temple is less developed, the canonical apocalypse called Daniel, the narrative emphasizes the Temple as the site of a battle of cosmic and historical and therefore ultimate significance. Other aspects of sacred memory and history are incorporated in these texts, to be sure, but it is the disposition of Zion that anchors the narrative, whether at the beginning (2 and 3 Baruch), the end (Daniel) or both (Ezekiel, 4 Ezra).

Such representations of the Temple do not occur in a vacuum, however; these texts clearly have an audience in mind, whether actual or anticipated. They are often addressing social survival and matters of common anxiety. Because of the relationship for these uses of the past to present group concerns, these apocalypses have the potential

⁴⁵ Homans, "Introduction," 22.

⁴⁶ Homans, "Introduction," 24–25. One may even see a further functional equivalency between film and apocalypse in this regard. Like apocalypse, film is a medium in which form and content, revelation and concealment, and narrative and symbolism are in constant interplay to create an alternative reality, one that sometimes seems more real than that of the mundane world.

to transform an audience into a *community* which could be considered both a *textual* community and a community of *memory*.⁴⁷ This community shares a trauma but through writing, reading, interpreting, and perhaps even performing the text participates in a new vision for the future, as individual readers vicariously participate in the emotional journey of loss, mourning, and recovery depicted in the texts.

Apocalyptic texts *cum* monuments make a claim about what must be remembered by its associated community and how. Implicitly, the larger Jewish community's consensual reality and collective memory are threatened yet are also in play. Apocalypses can stake a particular claim to cosmic authority, establish the meaning of the loss of Zion, and portray its imminent return because the destruction of the First Temple not only eradicated the physical structure but also what Pierre Nora calls the *milieux de mémoire* (environment of memory) surrounding it, transforming the Temple into *un lieu de mémoire*, a *site* of memory.

Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory] where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn—but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*...because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory.⁴⁸

Nora writes here about a certain break in modern Western historical consciousness, but like the apocalypticists, he recognizes that it is the particular way the events of history are transpiring that depletes the memory environment and thus spurs the drive for reattachment to the past. This perception he calls, with apocalyptic flair, 'the acceleration of history.'⁴⁹

⁴⁷ On textual communities, see Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 23–24. On communities of memory, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994), 47–49.

⁴⁸ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7. On sites of memory aggregating in Judean religious, political, and textual traditions, see Smith, *Memoirs of God*, 134–35.

⁴⁹ Nora, "Between Memory," 7. The coming of a millennial New Age is sometimes compared to the contractions of a woman in labor, hence a 'quickenings' as its 'birth' approaches.

For Nora, in modernity the historian is motivated by the discontinuity between an under-meaningful present and a past wherein lies the key to all meaning but which is now perpetually out of reach, not in spite of contemporary historical analysis but because of it. Such a point-of-view also applies to the apocalyptic visionary who seeks to reconcile the discontinuity between the moribund Temple's contemporary status and the idealization of its pre-Exilic *Doppelgänger*. The uncontrolled, intrusive remembrance of reality as it once was elides the gap in meaning between past and present, producing a memory in the fantasy form of a hallucination or vision. This apparition is not a return *to* the site of memory but a return *of* it, alien and incongruous with the present, a self-contained mystery that affects everything around it.

Only in a regime of discontinuity are such hallucinations of the past conceivable. Our relation to the past is now formed in subtle play between its intractability and its disappearance, a question of representation—in the original sense of the word—radically different from the old ideal of resurrecting the past. . . . But the loss of a single explanatory principle, while casting us into a fragmented universe, has promoted every object—even the most humble, the most improbable, the most inaccessible—to the dignity of a historical mystery.⁵⁰

In apocalypticism, the past and present undergo just such a transformation, each influencing the other's representation; as in the dynamics of collective memory, "[t]he mixing of original and contemporary meanings secures a new presence of the past."⁵¹

In the Zion Apocalypses, however, an actual, deeply traumatic loss on the cultural and personal levels underscores the usual elegiac force of historical memory. The fall of the Temple in 587 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. deprived many of the citizens of Judah of the central symbol of their religious worldview. Moreover, the events that occasioned the catastrophe ran counter to the prevailing expectations of the culture, forcing its members to reevaluate them. As Yael Zerubavel warns, "When the constructed memory is shattered by the historical record, history can become disturbing news."⁵² On the other hand, memory also can blunt these traumas, for as they recede into the past, they too become memories, and are available for the same narrative and

⁵⁰ Nora, "Between Memory," 17.

⁵¹ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*, 90.

⁵² Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 220.

symbolic transformation examined here. “[A]s much as history can besiege memory, memory can also besiege history.”⁵³ In apocalypse, memory besieges history—and wins. It eradicates the world’s capricious effects on the Jewish population while establishing YHWH as firmly in control of events as they culminate in the Endtimes.

To reassert God’s control over the cosmos, the apocalyptic visionary has two unlimited palates: the Heavens and the Future. In these areas, in counter-distinction to the world’s apparently corrupt and distorted reality, the apocalyptic visions can depict with authority the plan of history, the sites of cosmological reward or punishment, the patterns of the astronomical bodies, and the ultimate significance of things and events *cum* ‘historical mysteries.’ In the case of the Zion Apocalypses, the senselessness of the contemporary ruination of the actual Temple/City structure necessitates the idealization of the original spaces. The contemporary structure of the Temple, whether in tact but defiled (Daniel), in ruins (4 Ezra, 2 and 3 Baruch), or both over a period of time (Ezekiel) occasions the symbolification of Zion as a simultaneous marker of past, present, and future meaning.

This kind of marking in space and structures can become an imperative matter for close-knit societies, especially in the aftermath of war.

[P]hysically distinct spaces—cemeteries, memorials, monuments, but also buildings and structures from times long gone...mark particular collective experiences as important, all the while crystallizing the particulars of the past into symbols.⁵⁴

The public witnessing and testimonial to the loss that occurs in these memorial structures is crucial to keeping society from falling hopelessly into its tragic past.⁵⁵ The force of the symbol lies not in the particulars of its representation but in the fact that what it signifies, though absent, now occupies an inviolable space for the community of

⁵³ Zerubabel, *Recovered Roots*, xix.

⁵⁴ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*, 150–51. Another case, post-World War I Europe, is examined by Jay Witner in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Significantly, Witner devotes two chapters to the ‘apocalyptic imagination’ in the art and literature of the period, and notes this creativity’s relationship to ‘collective madness’ (202–3) and its role in cultural healing (176–77). See also Neal, *National Trauma*, 206.

⁵⁵ “Mourning, if it is not to become entrapped in the desperate inertia of a double bind [of melancholia], if it is to become integrated into a history, must be witnessed” (Eric Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990], 28).

the text, as the “sense of loss acquires permanence.”⁵⁶ This permanent, recurring perception of loss is the very hallmark of melancholia and is clearly evident in the Zion Apocalypses, where the loss of Zion, though it happened years in the past, defines the whole cosmos for the seer. It is the single, indisputable fact of existence. Even in Ezekiel, where the Temple has not yet been physically destroyed, it is lost to Exile, then destroyed again in fantasy (Ezek 8–10). The post-70 apocalypses (i.e., 4 Ezra, 2 and 3 Baruch) all address the destruction of the Second Temple by returning to the destruction of the First.

True to the psychoanalytic reading of these texts, the symptoms of the trauma also indicate the path to healing. By returning over and over again to the events whereby Zion was first lost, the texts begin a process of working through the pain of that memory. As Mark S. Smith argues regarding the impact of the major ancient Judaic ‘social tragedies’ on the scriptural corpus that followed,

[T]o tell the story of the past is to explore the reasons for the present state of matters; figuratively speaking, to ‘get past’ it. Historical writing seems, then, to *capture in memory what has been otherwise lost in life*. In short, to write back through the past is to *enable moving through present loss and toward the future*.⁵⁷

By this understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Zion Apocalypses are only presenting explicitly the inherent memorial and therapeutic nature of the Bible. Traumatic remembering and collective mourning are inseparably conjoined in these texts.

Yet the Zion Apocalypses, as focused on the lost Temple, are distinctive in an important way. In their commemorative function, collective remembrance and mourning together find expression in a radically disjunctive, partially subversive, reordering of tradition; they represent, in fact, a challenge to reality itself. Memorials do not simply occasion reminiscing; they mark a disruption in the scheme of history, auspicious or deleterious. The First Temple, in a way, was a memorial to YHWH’s inception of the Davidic house and covenant, while the Second Temple to some would always be emblematic of Israel’s fall from grace, the mercy of God to allow a remnant, and the disjunction between Jewish society as it was and as it would be when it is divinely restored in the Messianic Age. Although the restored Temple

⁵⁶ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*, 92.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Memoirs of God*, 137–38; emphasis mine.

did not itself serve as an eschatological symbol, its commemoration in its idealized counterpart, the Heavenly Temple, marks the point from which the meaning of the past must be understood and accepted and the meaning of the future understood and anticipated.⁵⁸

Monuments, in the sense that Homans recognizes them, allow a culture to mourn its past, making it possible to carry on in a new world. What makes the Zion apocalypses unique is the idealized, symbolic, and *absent* nature of the structure in question. These apocalyptic visions deal with the loss of the past and a new construction of the future in a series of symbolic episodes, but they do not fundamentally direct their reconstruction towards a this-worldly, concrete set of achievable goals or realistic opportunities. They imagine a radical transformation of reality itself, culminating with heavenly—i.e., ideal, ultimate, eternal—reality consummating all human history and being. With its symbolic constructions, narrative structure, and idealized if fictitious accounts of history, this heavenly reality represents a realm of collective fantasy.

The Zion Apocalypses appear to be documents capturing the experience of melancholia at its height, the crucial time when the past is gone yet still more tangible than the present. The return of the past presents a conflict of realities, one that is given representation by the juxtaposition of divine and earthly realia in a vision. The existence of the *angelus interpres* and the revelation of the secret knowledge of the heavens affects the visionary in a deeply troubling, even terrifying way. Ultimately, the vision's effect on both the seer and the reader is compelling yet terrifying, monstrous yet sublime—in a word, *uncanny*.

The Uncanny Temple

In his 1919 essay “The ‘Uncanny’”—in German, *das Unheimliche*, ‘the un-homelike’—Freud writes,

If psycho-analytic theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*.... For this uncanny is in reality

⁵⁸ Richard A. Horsley, “Empire, Temple and Community—But No Bourgeoisie! A Response to Blenkinsopp and Petersen,” in *Persian Period* (vol. 1 of *Second Temple Studies*; JSOTSup 117; ed. Philip R. Davies; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 174.

nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.⁵⁹

'Uncanny' describes the effect of something known but repressed that suddenly emerges from repression. As such, it presents two different realities for the same world, a manifest, familiar one into which a latent, unknown one threatens to erupt. Unnervingly, this second reality is in some ways actually felt to be more real and more familiar than the first. It has been concealed from everyday experience but begins to make itself known as the everyday becomes alien, and estrangement replaces familiarity. Freud's analysis of the uncanny genre of Romantic literature illustrates how this effect is achieved especially in the description of houses, the repetition of events, the doubling of individuals, and the distinct presence of something absent. Architectural scholar Anthony Vidler notes,

For Freud, 'unhomeliness' was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream.⁶⁰

Dreams, *déjà vu*, and other phenomena interrupt everyday life with a glimpse of some other (or 'Other') reality. The effect is of discontinuity and disorientation, even though the contents of the dream or what it is that one has 'seen before' may be quite mundane.

Undeniably many Judeans underwent this experience of unreality as the Babylonians laid siege to the city, carted off its citizens, and burnt its Temple. With the estrangement of exile, loss of homeland, and the daily confrontation with an unfamiliar reality, Vidler's description of the uncanny's association with home, houses, and cities seems *apropos*:

As a concept... the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community... has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), SE 17: 225.

⁶⁰ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT), 7.

⁶¹ Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 11.

Modernity's disorienting 'incursions' arise out of the ways that the disappointments of history call into question the certitude of cultural identity, the enduring qualities of the West's 'truths' not just for the future, but for living in any meaningful way in the present—the very same sentiment articulated by Freud in "On Transience" during World War I and Nora regarding *les lieux de mémoire*.⁶² While the tension between history and meaning at root in modernity is not solely the result of the European wars of the twentieth century, war certainly leaves most everything it touches strange in its wake. In the Jewish context, of course, the incursions were specifically brought about by two military, imperial onslaughts. Still an anxiety over the passage of history and a concern for the structure of the future is common to both eras; this consideration of time results in a propensity to idealize its constructions. In the Modern era, some of these idealizations emerged in the new reflections on culture, society, and the individual in the social sciences—including psychoanalysis. In his own way, then, Freud, whose acute sense of loss in the world and, relatedly, his analysis of his own inability to mourn revealed to him the secrets of the unconscious, became only the latest in a series of Jewish prophets to transform his culture, his society, and even the world in the course of healing his own psyche.

In the aftermath of the Babylonian and Roman conquests, the two geographic homes of Zionistic theology, the House of God and the City of David, undergo this uncanny estrangement in apocalypse. The experience of estrangement from sacred reality is both terrifying and extraordinary. In a sense, it is a form of the holy in its own right.⁶³

⁶² The modernist worldview is "equally caught in the dilemmas of temporality, tied to the inhospitable context of the here-and-now at the same time as imagining a there-and-then. This anxiety of time, as expressed in the intellectual attempts to imagine impossible futures or return to equally impossible pasts, was accompanied by a fascination with the consequences of time's errors—the dystopian effects of unwonted interferences with the natural development of things, on the one hand, and the psychological effects of past and future shock on the other" (Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 5). The parallel with the apocalyptic preoccupation with 'time's errors' and 'impossible' pasts and futures is, well, uncanny.

⁶³ "The uncanny...was perhaps the most subversive of all...because it seemed at times indistinguishable from the sublime" (Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 21). For example, in Ezek 8–10, the former priest digs through one of the Temple walls to discover alien worship practiced by the Elders in secret. Then YHWH oversees his angels' burning of the Temple and city. Recall also Rudolph Otto's definition of the Holy as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1950; repr. 1970]).

In the Zion apocalypses the Temple is as much a haunted house as a *haunting* house; Jerusalem has become, in a double sense, a ghost town. The Zion Apocalypses double and even triple the image of the Temple/City, first as the shattered earthly structure, then in recounting the 'history' of the First Temple, and finally in the vision of the perfect Heavenly edifices that will appear in the future. This re-presentation of realities indicated by the uncanny elements of apocalypse relates not only to a struggle for the recovery of identity by individuals within a shattered culture but also that of the culture itself. The larger symbolic world has already been lost, called into question by events past and present, the manifestations of history becoming less and less intelligible. Reality thus diminished becomes strange and suspect.

In such a situation, many would wish for some secret, hidden, and more significant—more 'real'—reality. Through the mechanisms of fantasy projection, an ultimate, heavenly reality is perceived to have always existed, concealed until such time as a righteous individual may be made privy to it. That righteous one, the apocalyptic visionary, experiences an uncanny kind of disorientation in light of the heavenly revelation. Ezekiel falls on his face at the inception of the vision (1:28); at its end (3:14–15) the overall emotional agitation is conveyed by the words 'bitter' (מר), 'my spirit raging' (בחמת רוח), 'overpowered' (חזקה), and 'desolate' (משמים). At the end of Daniel's own first apocalypse, he states, "My thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed" (7:28). He complains after the second, "I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding" (8:27b). Enoch, Baruch, and Ezra experience similar reactions to their visions.⁶⁴ The visionaries' minds reel at the clash of realities they experience, and part of the measure of the effectiveness of this literature in drawing an audience into its emotional situation is that modern readers' do also.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ On the psychology of terror in apocalyptic theophany, see Merkur, "Visionary Practices," 135–40.

⁶⁵ One interesting parallel with the apocalyptic visionary's experience in modern literature that reflects the traumatic impact of war in a distinctly contemporary way is found in Kurt Vonnegut's 1969 novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, survives the decimating Allied firebombing of Dresden. However, most of the novel concerns his spontaneous time-travel and uncanny, fantastic encounters with an alien species, the Tralfamadorians. When finally the psychological barrier that separates his World War II experience from his 'otherworldly hallucination' falls, the novel states, "He had supposed for years that he had no secrets from himself. Here was proof that he had a great big secret somewhere inside, and he could not imagine what it was" (Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* [New York: Dell, 1969], 173).

The uncanny disorientation of apocalyptic revelation provides further evidence that a melancholic state underlies the seers' experiences. This observation is reinforced by other psychological interpretations of the underlying meaning of melancholia. One entire chapter of William James' seminal *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is devoted to 'sick souls,' ultra-sensitive individuals who perceive a radical division between themselves and the rest of world that calls into question their very existence or the existence of the world itself. Apocalyptic visionaries fit this bill precisely. Regarding one famous example, Leo Tolstoy, James writes,

the sense that life had any meaning whatever was for a time wholly withdrawn.... In melancholiacs... [t]he world now looks remote, strange, sinister, uncanny.... There are some subjects whom all this leaves a prey to the profoundest astonishment. The strangeness is wrong. The unreality cannot be. A mystery is concealed, and a metaphysical solution must exist. If the natural world is so double-faced and unhomelike, what world, what thing is real? An urgent wondering and questioning is set up... and in the desperate effort to get into right relations with the matter, the sufferer is often led to what becomes for him a satisfying religious solution.⁶⁶

James describes this solution, a type of conversion or religious intensification, specifically in the language of the Book of Revelation: "a transformation in the whole expression of reality.... A new heaven seems to shine upon a new earth."⁶⁷

Whether representing the voice of a set-upon community or the upbraiding of a corrupt one, the apocalypticians are fully aware of two separate realities, one manifest and distorted, one latent and impending. Apocalypses are uncanny because they represent not the possibility but the certainty of heavenly reality. Moreover, they suggest that at some point in the possibly near future, this reality will supplant earthly reality completely. Indeed, in the Zion apocalypses, it is the very site where the Temple was lost that initiates the series of revelations that brings about its recovery. Despite its bona fide promise, the Second Temple period never offered a return to the glory of the Davidic monarchy, ensuring that the events of the Exile would linger as a living presence, long after its end. Notwithstanding the return to

⁶⁶ Williams James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier, 1961), 132.

⁶⁷ James, *Varieties*, 131–32.

valid Temple practice after the end of the Exile, the injustices committed against the sanctity of the Temple would simmer for some, waiting to recur when the larger cultural environment gave them new life.

Under the enormous Hellenistic empire, the context in which apocalypticism proper arose, the disparity for many cultures between the past and present was pronounced. In Judea war would impinge on the Temple in the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, then again under Roman rule, which would ultimately lead to its thus far permanent end. The occasions of history repeating itself represented a kind of uncanny doubling, the significance of which the Zion Apocalypses (excepting Ezekiel, which has its own instantiations of doubling) seized upon by claiming the circumstances of the original traumatic destruction for their settings. The perceived transience of human history in the nineteenth century was one of the philosophical underpinnings of the Romantic notion of the uncanny; the same may be argued for the apocalypticists of ancient Judaism.⁶⁸ As Collins notes,

The Hellenistic age was marked by widespread nostalgia for the past and alienation from the present. In a broad sense this 'Hellenistic mood' may be considered a matrix for the apocalyptic literature.⁶⁹

Then as now, history itself was an existential problem that occasioned a wish for understanding that finally dispelled the disconcerting demands of the 'presence of the past.'

In apocalypse, this conundrum and alienation is presented as conflict of cosmic realities. The temporal disjunction is symbolically transformed into the envisioned juxtaposition of divine and earthly realia. Revelation of the secret knowledge of the Heavens affects the visionary in a deeply troubling, even terrifying way, so much so that it is customary for an *angelus interpres*, as a kind of divine psychotherapist, to appear to him and guide him through an interpretation of his vision and what it means for his life. Thus apocalypse, as the process of recovery of a unified worldview after a significant loss is in some ways both a model *of* and a model *for* mourning, to evoke Clifford Geertz's distinctions in cultural analysis. The word 'recovery' has a double meaning for these texts: the process by which an old worldview's elements (Zion) are reconstituted for a new one; and the therapeutic sense that

⁶⁸ Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 5.

⁶⁹ Collins, *Imagination*, 28.

a traumatic period is complete, and one is now able satisfactorily to negotiate life's current and future challenges.

Mourning reconfigures the narratives of life. It repeats the past as if it were the present, mastering its absence, and allowing the attachment to it to withdraw as a new worldview is created to replace it. That is, there is a loss in the present, there is the work of mourning, the symbolic return of the repressed losses of the past, and a vision of recovery in the future. The Zion Apocalypses each exhibit this process to some degree in their manifest (textual) content, but the Freudian hermeneutic allows a modern reader to appreciate just how thoroughly these texts reflect the symptoms of melancholia and healing arc of mourning given each texts' specific social setting and the worldview one may reconstruct for their seers. Following this outline—worldview, social setting, loss in the present, the work of mourning, and the vision of recovery—and highlighting the key textual elements that indicate psychological processes at work (e.g., idealized images, utopian fantasies, or structured time) I will now trace the movement of mourning through the stories of those who lived through the end of the world and then saw the end for what it was: not just a new beginning, but a new reality altogether.

CHAPTER TWO

EZEKIEL: “DESOLATE AMONG THEM”

The Book of Ezekiel, as part of the prophetic corpus, is not generally regarded as an apocalypse *per se*, though some scholars deem certain sections proto-apocalyptic in light of the subsequent development of their imagery or themes.¹ Lester Grabbe, for one, challenges the very definitions of the categories ‘prophetic’ and ‘apocalyptic’ as used by scholars like Paul Hanson, demonstrating that they hold in common so many features as to make them practically indistinguishable and interchangeable in reference to Biblical texts.² In this spirit, I justify its inclusion in this study on the basis of both its literary form and content—revelatory, mediated, visionary, eschatological, overtly symbolic—and its worldview, which is divided between an indifferent, alienated worldly reality and a powerful, sometimes terrifying, heavenly reality (Ezek 1, 8–11, 40–48); where the meaning and events of the past and future are kept secret in the divine realm until they erupt into earthly experience and require interpretation (Ezek 2–3, 8–11, 37–48). It fits the paradigm, furthermore, of the Zion Apocalypses specifically due to its attention to the loss of the Temple, Jerusalem, and the nation (Ezek 4–10, 16, 22, 24) and to their restoration (Ezek

¹ That the Call Vision in Ezek 1–3 is apocalyptic is indicated by Michael Stone, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 85. Walther Zimmerli compares its language to 2 Bar. 22:1, sections of the Testament of Levi, the Testament of Judah, Daniel, and the Book of Revelation (*Ezekiel* [trans. R. Clements; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 1:116). The battle of Gog from Magog (chs. 38–39) is clearly in line with apocalyptic literature’s imagery but is often regarded as a later addition. Paul Hanson argues that the vision of the Temple in Ezek 40–48 is not proto-apocalyptic by virtue of its hierarchical and pragmatic orientation, one that runs counter to the visionary, democratic, and ahistorical or future orientation of ‘true’ proto-apocalypticism (Hanson, *Dawn*, 235–38), but this position draws a too-narrow line based on class distinctions, disregarding aspects of the text that replicate the form, content, or function of apocalyptic literature. Additionally, Stone suggests that Ezek 40–48 and the heavenly tour in 1 Enoch are structurally very similar (Stone, *Scriptures*, 44).

² Lester Grabbe, “Prophetic and Apocalyptic: Time for New Definitions—and New Thinking,” in *Knowing the End from the Beginning: The Prophetic, the Apocalyptic, and their Relationships* (ed. Lester Grabbe and Robert Haak; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 110–17.

11:16–20; 17:22–24; 20:33–44; 36–48). While many of its concerns are of the prophetic, here-and-now, judgment type, Ezekiel delivers them in a style and with a specific cosmic orientation that overall remains entirely consistent with apocalypse.³

The application of the psychoanalytic framework of mourning to the Book of Ezekiel highlights in a novel way the movement of the book as a whole from a deeply personal, literally stunning loss to a socially conscious, but still defensive and critical, re-evaluation of events past and present. It puts in context Ezekiel's highly idealized, fantastic view of the future that yields to an imaginative yet detailed and this-worldly appropriate view of what the recovery of the past for the future would mean. This chapter will explore the techniques and creativity that set in motion this healing trajectory for the author(s) and their readership.

The Unity Issue

In ancient texts, often the unity of creation, purpose, and reception implied by the notion of a healing process existing in their content and structure is unfortunately undermined by evidence of a redactional history or by its apparent reliance of a variety of source materials. Thus the authorship and literary unity of a text is an important, contentious issue in the scholarship. Sometimes there is no consensus as to whether an entire book was written by a single author or pieced together by several redactors. In one statement of the problem, Iain Deguid, writing on Ezekiel, for which this question remains unsettled, creates a quadrant system to relate opinions on this issue along the axes of *Exilic/Post-Exilic* and *Single Author/Multiple Redactors*, labeling the four resulting ideal types as conservative (essentially Exilic and a unity), pseudepigraphic (essentially post-Exilic but a unity), radical (essentially post-Exilic and redactional), and mediating (essentially Exilic but largely redactional). Most current work on Ezekiel assumes a

³ Moshe Greenberg notes that Ezekiel is the only prophet to have experienced visionary transportation, which happens three times (in Ezek 8, 37 and 43; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* [The Anchor Bible Commentary; New York: Doubleday, 1983], 200). Of course, this categorization excludes Elijah, who does not return when God takes him up, or Enoch, for whom the extrapolation of his translation into heaven in Gen 5:24 occurs extra-Biblically.

mediating position.⁴ The redactional efforts, I think, are key for understanding the kind of tradition built around the original prophecies and adapting them to the needs of the late Exilic and post-Exilic communities. Some authors prefer to speak of a 'school' of participants in the scribal transmission, edition, and composition of such texts.⁵ This school could involve the participation of the original prophet himself in the redactional process.

However, on the whole I am inclined to recognize more overall unity in these Zion Apocalypses than disparity created by the texts' editorial history. Like Moshe Greenberg, for instance, my position rests between that of the conservatives and the mediators. Practically speaking, this stance requires me to investigate the text as it stands while acknowledging that it was probably not written exactly as such.⁶ The idea of the prophetic or scribal school, especially one which may have enjoyed the direct participation of the original visionary for some time, conforms with the notion of a community that has coalesced around a catalytic figure in the course of or following a major turning point in the culture's history. Rather than return to the unity question in each chapter of this study, since I am examining the narrative and vicissitudes of the apocalypse as it stands, I will treat each text as a cohesive unit—if not in specific authorship from start to finish, then in terms of its concerns in the present, use of the past, and desires for the future expressed in a way complexly interrelated with its form.

⁴ Iain Deguid's exposition appears in *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 4–7. Zimmerli (*Ezekiel* 1–2) and Bruce Vawter and Leslie Hoppe (*A New Heart: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991]) take a mediating position.

⁵ Foremost among them, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:70–71. On the issue among the earlier prophets, see Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 226–29, in which he ascribes continuity between prophetic writings to societal 'support groups.' Such collectives were common, even the norm, in the scribal profession in the ancient Near East, including Babylonia, and so it should hardly be surprising to find a similar organization of learned men gathered around and transmitting Ezekiel's profound, if foreboding, utterances; see David W. Baker, "Scribes as Transmitters of Tradition," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (ed. Alan Millard, James Hoffmeier, and David Baker; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 65–77.

⁶ Greenberg calls his method a 'holistic interpretation'; see *Ezekiel* 1–20, 18–27. On this issue as it relates to Ezek 40–48, a vision which bears a literary style and theological concerns seemingly distinct from those of the original prophet, see Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48* (SBLDS 154; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 125–28.

The Book of Ezekiel will illustrate, along with the other hermeneutical goals of this study, the initial results of this approach.

Ezekiel's Worldview before the Exile

As a point of fact, we do not know if Ezekiel was in priestly service before the Exile or merely the son of a Zadokite priest. In either case he lived among the keepers of traditional Temple practice and was imbued with that worldview, providing some biographical context for the concerns with purity and Temple practice that dot the text.⁷ (For ease of nomenclature I will occasionally refer to Ezekiel as a priest, assuming by his lineage and his concerns that this designation is a generally accurate term of self-identification.) Yet to make such a statement is not to assume that he was a fervent Yahwist before 597.

Born sometime near the period of Josiah's reforms, Ezekiel would have spent his formative years socialized within their structure. He then would have suffered as a young man, with the rest of the Judeans, the humiliating defeat of his nation's army and the death of its king at the hands of the Egyptians. One estimate puts Ezekiel's birth circa 623, just before Josiah's reforms of 622.⁸ If this dating is reasonably accurate, Ezekiel would have been about fourteen years old when his king was killed at Megiddo in 609, and around twenty-five when he was deported to Babylon. In between these events, the question as to how much of Josiah's reform survived, and for how long, remains open; but it appears likely that older, previously suppressed practices,

⁷ On Ezekiel's priestly worldview, regardless of whether he ever served in the Temple, see Baruch Schwartz, "A Priest out of Place: Reconsidering Ezekiel's Role in the History of the Israelite Priesthood," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World* (ed. Stephen Cook and Corrine Patton; Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 63. Ezek 4:14, in which Ezekiel balks at cooking on human dung, may be an explicit reference to just such an education in priestly concerns (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* [Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 1990], 37)—especially if one grants Merkur's characterization of a hypothetical priestly upbringing, with its ever-present cautions over ritual purity, as 'anal' (Merkur, "Prophetic Initiation," 52). Risa Levitt Kohn extensively documents the linguistic correspondences between Ezek and the P source of the Pentateuch (Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile, and the Torah* [JSOTSup 358; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 30–83).

⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 11.

such as the *bāmôt* sanctuaries so hated by the Deuteronomists (1 Kgs 14:22–23), resumed activity under the monarchs who followed.⁹

This particular juxtaposition of history and biography suggests some interesting tensions or vulnerabilities that could throw Ezekiel the priest into an extremely uncertain state in the course of his exile. Having known no other king than Josiah and no other cultic system than the one that king established, Ezekiel must have acutely suffered the loss of Josiah and all he represented. In fact, if Erik Erikson's 'Eight Ages of Man' hold true for ancient Judaic society, this radical disruption of continuity in the social fabric would have happened at a critical time for a young man's sense of self in relation to his society. This age, very early adulthood, introduces a tension between identity and role confusion. The mind at this stage

is an ideological mind—and, indeed, it is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny, and inimical. In searching for the social values which guide identity, one therefore confronts the problems of *ideology* and *aristocracy*, both in their widest possible sense which connote that within a defined world image and a predetermined course of history, the best people will come to rule.¹⁰

⁹ Susan Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 49–51; cf. 2 Kgs 23–24, which indicates that Josiah's successors also did "evil in the eyes of YHWH," a phrase which consistently refers to tolerance regarding foreign practice in Judah, as does Jer 7:30; 13:27; 17:1–4; 32:34. Rainer Albertz goes even further to assert that the politico-cultic aspect of Josiah's reforms was the only feature to survive his death. The priesthood, having centralized the cult, were loath to give up the control they had been granted (Albertz, *History of Israelite Religion* (2 vols.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 1:233). Much of the confusion over the state of official Yahwism after Josiah's death comes, ironically, from the Vision of the Abominations in the Temple (Ezek 8). Though it is clearly stated that this is a visionary sequence from God, one view that prevailed in the scholarship for a time (held most influentially by V. Herntrich and Alfred Bertholet) insisted that it must actually reflect an eyewitness account of contemporary Temple practice—which led to even more confusion involving the location of Ezekiel's prophecy (in Jerusalem, not Babylon, at least in part). The counter-argument that these abominations did not exist in Ezekiel's time queered the issue even further by attributing them to the time of the wicked king Manasseh, thus prompting speculation that the Book of Ezekiel was, in fact, a post-Exilic fiction done in the style of Isaiah (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:4–7, 243; Ackerman, *Every Green Tree*, 46–48). Fortunately, most commentators now take the visionary context of Ezek 8 seriously.

¹⁰ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1963), 263; emphasis in original.

For young men at this stage the consequences of a highly-regarded national leader dying unexpectedly and ignominiously in battle would be to cast doubt on all issues of identity, until their roles in the world are otherwise affirmed and solidified. Ezekiel's new role as *prophet* in Exile over a decade later—during the stage defined as generativity (or *creativity*) versus stagnation—may have served just such a purpose.

We cannot say if Ezekiel openly resisted certain foreign and non-Yahwistic practices if and when they entered the scope of Temple worship. But he certainly recognized them as a departure from the Josianic standard under which he had been raised and educated. Walther Zimmerli, who believes new intrusions of foreign worship following Josiah's death are probable, still views Ezekiel as a priest who "speaks with a feeling for the cultic purity of worship before the Lord who dwells in the sanctuary."¹¹ As a young man in the priestly line, at the very least, Ezekiel would have harbored some initial suspicions regarding these practices—suspicions that re-emerge in the fantasy of the Abominations of the Temple (Ezek 8). If this psychological connection between Ezekiel's past and the vision of the Temple abominations holds true, we may also surmise that these practices appear in the fantasy context with some measure of guilt. Unlike Jeremiah, Ezekiel did not sound a warning before the calamity. Whatever his view of these practices, he remained complicit in their continued existence in the sanctuary.¹²

The Social Context of Ezekiel's Prophecy

While I will try to demonstrate below that the ramifications of the Exile occupy the priest-cum-prophet's psychological world to an extraordinary degree, even compared to his Judean compatriots in Babylon, it must be acknowledged that the Exile represents the single most central social fact for this entire group. Theology aside, these Exiles forcibly underwent a transition from power-holders in their own small but essentially independent country to a dispossessed minority in the capital of a giant empire. On the whole this group adapted well to their new surroundings—they possessed land, participated in and benefited

¹¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:245. Marvin Sweeney argues that the 'Royal Oracle' of restoration in Ezek 37 explicitly proposes a return to a Josianic ideal ("The Royal Oracle in Ezekiel 37:15–28: Ezekiel's Reflection on Josiah's Reform," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past* [ed. Brad Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore; New York: T&T Clark, 2006]).

¹² Albertz, *Israelite Religion* 2:370–75.

from the greatly expanded economic opportunities available to them, and, most important, found a way to preserve and transform their Temple-based Yahwism, mixed as it may have been, into a viable religious system outside of Judah.

The near-total wreckage inflicted by the Babylonian Conquest on institutional-level or 'official' religion in some ways only allowed for a return to older, more tribal or family oriented structures. In addition, doors opened for the expression of individual piety in ways rarely seen beforehand.¹³ Literary activity exploded, including the early compilation and redaction of the Torah, along with the Deuteronomic assimilation of the pre-Exilic prophets of judgment, beginning the shift from a Temple-based to a text-based Yahwism, which, Rainer Albertz explains, "sought to master the crisis and formulate a new beginning."¹⁴ The great by-product of this situation, as many have argued, is the turn toward scripture—that is, Torah—in lieu of Temple worship, which became the foundation of Second Temple piety, at least in parallel with Temple practice itself.

So what of Ezekiel the Exile, formerly of the priestly circles in Jerusalem, now in a land without a Temple? Baruch Schwartz asserts,

When this, the last earthly resting place of the divine presence, was destroyed, the worship of Yahweh became impossible. Not only did the primary, defining role of the priest simply become extinct, for all intents and purposes, the priest themselves were no longer priests.¹⁵

It is impossible to say what roles other priests took on in Babylon, though it is likely they were involved in some local leadership and religious functions, including education (Ezek 7:26; 22:26). But Ezekiel, even in the midst of his society, takes a stance on its margins.¹⁶ He instructs the Elders (lay leaders) or the people as a whole, defining their experience for them, but remains essentially apart from them.¹⁷

¹³ Albertz, *Israelite Religion* 2:369–70.

¹⁴ Albertz, *Israelite Religion* 2:369. On the Josianic and Exilic compilation and redaction of the TaNaKh, see M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* I (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1943); F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 278–89; John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 333, 350; and Smith, *Landless*, 139–42.

¹⁵ Schwartz, "Priest out of Place," 63.

¹⁶ Cf. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 283–86, on Ezekiel as a marginal or peripheral prophet.

¹⁷ Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (Decatur, Ga.: Almond, 1989), 44, 83–84.

His relationship to the various groups in the Exilic society is one-sided; he speaks the Word of the Lord to criticize and accuse, and his interaction with others is limited to sign acts whereby he appears as a model for them. Significantly, for most of the first half of the text, Ezekiel is struck dumb (though he can still speak the Word of God) and is confined to his house, where the Elders must seek him out. The idiosyncratic nature of these gestures suggests that, stripped of the official supports of his religion, Ezekiel experiences novelty and uncertainty in his personal piety to an unprecedented and even frightening degree. But Ezekiel also makes his own contribution toward the re-establishment of the sphere of religion that had been lost. Like the creative response to Exile that brought about the consolidation of the Pentateuch, Ezekiel's prophecy made textual strides that marked a shift not only in the way in which Yahwistic religion was envisioned, but in how it created its own community, with the figure of the prophet as exemplar and guide.

Loss in the Present

Unlike the other texts I will examine, the Book of Ezekiel is not dependent on the tradition of the fall of Jerusalem and its Temple for its setting but rather shapes that tradition as reality brings those very events into the Exiles' midst.¹⁸ In fact, more than half the book takes place

¹⁸ In this respect, we might usefully compare Ezek to a *captivity narrative*, such as were written by Puritans during the course of their conflicts with American natives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One exceptional study, Mitchell Breitwieser's *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning: Religion, Grief, and Ethnology in Mary White Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), examines the process by which the narrative of one woman, Mary Rowlandson, written after her abduction by Algonquin Indians in 1676, provides a creative forum for her to mourn her past, adapt to her present circumstances, and prepare for a very different future, especially in light of Puritanism's characteristic resistance to and sublimation of the mourning process. As a Puritan, and like Ezekiel, Old Testament theology structures Rowlandson's initial worldview. Also like Ezekiel, that worldview is shattered by a devastating apparent failure of God to protect the new people of his covenant. Rowlandson loses her home and husband through captivity, then a child to death during it. She responds at first by chiding her fellow Puritans for moral laxity and by seeking scriptural examples in the Jews' own laments, citing Pss 38, 109, and 137; Isaiah; and Job, among others. However, what becomes abundantly clear in Breitwieser's study is Mary Rowlandson's use of the past—her past, the Puritans' past, the Jews' past—constantly to re-examine and redefine her grief. In the course of her narrative, she moves from an emotional shock that brings her nearly to the point of catatonia to comprehension, even appreciation and optimism, about her

between five years after the first deportation in 597 and the actual destruction of the Temple in 587. Thus while the prophet in Exile feels the loss of the two most important Zionistic structures already, the Temple remains intact even as he envisions its destruction in ch. 9. Therefore his prophecy of the Temple's destruction and the further consummation of the city relate psychologically to the losses he has already sustained. Ezekiel's attitude toward the fall of the Temple and City structures is most clearly illustrated in the visions of chs. 8–11 and the connection between the Temple's imminent fall and the death of his wife in ch. 24. The text mentions the Temple occasionally at other places as well, such as Ezek 7:20–22 and 22:26. Curiously, the actual report of the fall in 33:21–22 comes across briefly and dispassionately, almost as an afterthought.

The Exile in Babylon threatened to subsume the Israelites and their worldview completely. The task of preserving Jewish identity required radically re-evaluating not only recent history and the events in Jerusalem leading up to its fall but in fact the whole traditional, received perspective on the order of Israelite society—even, at times, back to its earliest days. Kalinda Rose Stevenson states that these prophecies are a "strong antidote to nostalgia, to wishful thinking, to denial, to comforting memories of the good old days back home."¹⁹ Of course the mourning model of this study posits that it is exactly those fantasies of the past that drive Ezekiel's visions in the first place—but only so that they can themselves be destroyed, the Exile's attachment to them severed. The Book of Ezekiel aims to plant a novel picture in the minds of any of the Exiles receptive to such a stark change in perspective. This process commences almost immediately with the Call Vision.

The Call Vision

Passages that indicate mourning explicitly in the Book of Ezekiel (2:10b; 24:16b–24) were cited in the introduction to this study. Yet Ezekiel's melancholic state of mind may first be glimpsed in the verses bracketing the Call Vision. Ezekiel 1:1, 3 places Ezekiel in exile next

life with the Algonquins. When she is finally returned home to her husband, she no longer can live in the Puritan world as she once did, but sees a much larger example for her people in her experience, much as Ezekiel was to be a sign for all the Exiles (Ezek 24:24).

¹⁹ Stevenson, *Transformation*, 148–49.

to the Kebar River; no mention is made of his state of mind.²⁰ Yet the odd shift from the first to third person and back again has the effect of introducing ambiguity for the reader from the start, giving the impression that Ezekiel does not quite know if he is a subject or an object in this vision.²¹ This state is echoed throughout the text, as we will see, such as when the prophet swallows the scroll or performs his Sign Acts.

Ezekiel 3:14–15, after his extraordinary vision, finds the prophet back where he started, only this time his emotional state is identified clearly:

A wind lifted me and took me, and I went, bitter, my spirit raging, overpowered by the hand of YHWH. I came to the exiles at Tel Abib, who were living by the Kebar canal and...there I sat seven days, desolate among them.²²

The overall emotional agitation is conveyed by the words ‘bitter’ (מר), ‘my spirit raging’ (בחמת רוחי), and ‘overpowered’ (חזקה); but most interesting is the use of the word ‘desolate’ (משמים). Following the range of meanings discussed by N. Lohfink, Greenberg suggests that the word “adds to aloneness the notion of numbing wretchedness, unnerving shock.”²³ Certainly it indicates his desperate isolation even among his fellow exiles, as may the note on the length of time which he sat: seven days, or one *shiva* period.²⁴

²⁰ The detail of the proximity of the river could indicate possible mystical induction techniques in play; cf. the introductory verses in the Greek version of 3 Bar.

²¹ This ambiguity raises its own set of textual questions, as well, which lie outside of our concerns here; for one solution, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 39. Intriguingly, Michael Lieb notes that the presence of the eyes on the ‘living beings’ (*hayyot*) of the Call Vision makes it a vision which also *sees*: “Ezekiel as a seer (*rō’eh*) finds himself in the paradoxical position of the one who is seen by his own vision” (Lieb, *The Visionary Mode: Biblical Prophecy, Hermeneutics, and Cultural Change* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991], 40).

²² M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 61. Where I cite Greenberg’s analysis I use his translation, here and below.

²³ N. Lohfink, “Enthielten die im Alten Testament bezeugten Klageriten eine Phase des Schweigens?” VT 12 (1962): 267–69; cited in Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 72.

²⁴ Ralph Klein, however, compares this period of silent sitting with that of Job’s friends at Job 2:13, which he claims is neither unusual or “evidence of ill-health” (Klein, *Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message* [Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988], 9). The comparison is more enlightening and apt than Klein indicates. Like Ezekiel, Job, too, has lost all the good things in his life; but unlike the prophet, he has not lost the historical proof that God still acts in history—quite the opposite, in fact. His friends hear about his condition and go to comfort him. But they do not merely go and sit compassionately by Job’s side until he decides to speak;

And what of the vision itself? Lorenz Dürr finds Babylonian precedents for most of the Call Vision's images, and André Parrot views the four-faced creature propelling this throne-chariot as reflecting Assyrian iconography, including winged bulls protecting the royal palace at Khorsabad who have a man's head, eagles' wings, the breast of a lion, and the body of a bull.²⁵ It is useful to note here as well that the Hebrew word for 'north,' as the direction of the origin of the vision, has distinct connotations in Israel and the ancient Near East as the secret place of valued things, namely the home of the gods.²⁶ Precedents in the Hebrew Bible also include God's enthronement with the cherubim at Pss 18:10; 99:1; and 1 Sam 4:4; as well as the appearance of the chariot of fire with the ascension of Elijah (2 Kg 2:11). Ezekiel's commission all in all strongly recalls that of Isa 6:1–13, especially the details of the seraphim covering themselves and flying with various sets of wings (6:2; cf. Ezek 1:11), the purification by mouth (a hot coal in Isaiah, a sweet scroll in Ezekiel), and the ambivalent message of sending a prophet to a people who will not and cannot hear it until long after they have been destroyed (Isa 6:9–10; cf. Ezek 3:7–9). We should note that the root of the storm term used here (סער) has rage and wrath associations, especially where YHWH is concerned (2 Kg 6:11; Jer 23:19; Ps 83:16; Isa 29:6; Ezek 13:13), underscoring the latent affect of the visionary imagery. The theophanies of YHWH as storm, cloud, or fire god (Pss 68:4; 104:3; the Saving Acts at Exod 14:19, 24 and the Law-giving at Exod 19:16–18) offer additional parallels with Ezekiel's call.

True enough, these associations or antecedents exist, but they do not determine the meaning or effect of this vision. For Michael Lieb,

rather, when they see him, "they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. Then they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great" (Job 2:12–13). I cannot agree with Klein that anything about this scenario smacks of the ordinary. The friends come to comfort Job, but find him so unlike himself as to be unrecognizable. They proceed to weep and wail and perform mourning rites as if he were already dead. Then for all intents and purposes they sit *shiva* with him; for his familial losses, to be sure, but, one might surmise from their reaction to him, in part for what appears to be Job's own living death.

²⁵ L. Dürr, *Ezechiels Vision von der Erscheinung Gottes (Ez. c. I u. 10) im Licht der vorderasiatischen Altertumskunde* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1917); A. Parrot, *Babylon and the Old Testament* (trans. B.E. Hooke; New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 128–36; cf. the discussion in Lieb, *Visionary Mode*, 26–32.

²⁶ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, "צפון," BDB, 860–61.

[a]s a text it at once yields itself willingly to a recognition of the coherences in which conventional literary analysis delights and, at the same time, undermines attempts at such analysis at the very moment of exegesis. As a result of this tension within the text, the vision is conceptualized in such a way so as at once to suggest associations with identifiable objects and at the same time to undermine those associations at every point.²⁷

Lieb does not say so directly, but the way in which he speaks of the associations among meaning, objects, and the visionary images is a precise description of the interlocking construction of dreams. Images are familiar, even obvious, yet at the same time look or feel like nothing ever encountered before; they are uncanny. To concentrate on possible sources of allusions dilutes the originality of both the vision and its message. Its details are profuse yet strangely vague and disconcerting, almost as if, paradoxically, they describe something other than what they denote. Dan Merkur, for his part, emphasizes the unique, personal nature of this experience:

Ezekiel's vision is associated with and permitted the manifestation of unconscious materials of highly personal content. Discussion of Ezekiel's personality may fairly proceed on the evidence of his deviations from stereotyped, cultural uses of trance states.²⁸

From the start, the Call Vision draws the reader or audience into a place in which the work of the unconscious is being done.

Central to the vision are the *hayyot*—"living things" with four faces and "wheels within wheels," with eyes "all around" (Ezek 1:16, 18). Again, while the multiple faces evoke the composite beasts of various ancient mythologies, in this case they do not cohere into one 'beast.' These images may also represent shattered worldviews or ego fragmentation, or a literal illustration of the term 'multiple personalities.' They remain resistant to being understood as anything but a whole, as a kind of *Gestalt* divinity. Their uncanny qualities are quite literally reduplicated by their four-fold existence. Repetition, in fact, is the defining aspect of these creatures. Apart from their, and their faces', multiplicity, the wheels themselves are doubled, as a 'wheel within the wheel.' The term *galgal* used at their second appearance (Ezek 10:2, 6)

²⁷ Lieb, *Visionary Mode*, 32. Or as Stevenson states concerning Ezek 40–48, "the issue is not that someone pieced together scraps, but that someone wanted a quilt" (Stevenson, *Transformation*, 7).

²⁸ Merkur, "Prophetic Initiation," 51.

literally underscores the repetition. Finally, the eyes are 'all around' them. Lieb suggests that this vision is a product of absolute sight, of pure revelation. Alternatively, the imagery also calls to mind Freud's dream censor, the all-seeing, all-knowing protector of psychic reality and the gate-keeper of unconscious revelation.²⁹

The sum effect of this vision, besides awe and terror on the part of the seer, is a totality of revelation, distorted into a series of strange, incredible images by its reception, almost as if Ezekiel looks at God through a kaleidoscope. Lieb discusses the way in which the very intensity of this visionary experience necessarily obscures itself visually (as the actual faces of the *hayyot* never resolve themselves in any discernable order, and the mechanics and composition of the throne vision are lost in the complexity of their detail) and textually (besides the myriad of textual difficulties, starting with the date and person provided by the first verses, the constant use of distancing and approximating language separates the seer—and thus the reader—from the vision's direct experience). "Rather than clarifying what the prophet sees," writes Lieb, "a plethora of details prevents the vision from ever coming into sharp focus. The more that Ezekiel says about it, the less we know."³⁰ In addition, the high level of distortion in the vision

²⁹ Lieb, *The Visionary Mode*, 40. Eyes, of course, are rich dream symbols, as Freud and others in the psychoanalytic school have illustrated. 'Oedipus Rex,' the central narrative of psychoanalysis, concludes with the protagonist destroying his eyes so as to 'protect' him from—i.e., censor—what he has revealed about himself. See Freud, *Dreams*, 398 n. 1; Otto Rank, "Eine noch nicht beschriebene Form des Ödipus-Traumes," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 1 (1913): 151–56; M.D. Eder, "Augenträume," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 1 (1913): 157–58; Sándor Ferenczi, "Zur Augensymbolik," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* 1 (1913): 161–64.

³⁰ Lieb, *Visionary Mode*, 38–39. It is worth noting here that the mystery of the chariot vision becomes a center point of Rabbinic mystical speculation in the Merkabah literature. In association with the prohibitions against certain studies of forbidden sexuality and of creation, one gets the sense that the Merkabah is a source of great potency, in all likelihood associated with the utmost of *YHWH*'s power—i.e., the source of meaning, the source of creation, the source of being. One cannot come too close to it without becoming undone, unless an enormous amount of preparation is invested in gathering wisdom and knowledge—about God, the Torah, and oneself. Halperin, like Lieb, also sees this power revealed by the text yet concealed by its obscurities. "In the more intelligible parts of Scripture, the rabbis may have sensed, the divine mysteries hidden behind the veil of the Bible's simple language were kept so far back that the veil hung smoothly before them. Here they thrust themselves forward, their bulges distorting the veil's contours. Otherwise, how to explain the difficulties of the prophet's language.... The difficulties... must point to the shape of the secrets behind them. Resolve those difficulties, and the secrets will become plain" (Halperin, *Faces*

insinuated by the repetitious use of כְּעֵין, מְרֹאֵה, and דְּמוּת—variously translated in Ezekiel as ‘appearance,’ ‘vision,’ or ‘likeness’—suggests the presence of censorship even as ὕμνη’s *kābôd* (manifest glory) is revealed. For example, note the levels of distancing from the central revelation at Ezek 1:26:

And above the dome over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form.³¹

The wheels contribute to another effect of the text. Several times it mentions that the wheels do not turn as the beings move (1:9, 12, 17; 10:11). This fact leads Lieb to assert that the whole vision betrays a tension between movement and stasis, or at least conveys a sense of motion within stasis.³² This image is a perfect metaphor for the psychology of melancholia, and hence Ezekiel’s own psychology at this very moment. A manifestation of the compulsion to repeat often has the effect of moving yet standing still; the *ḥayyot*, as the duplicated wheels of the throne vehicle, do the same. As a product of fantasy, the effect of movement is produced not by showing the beings physically flitting here and there but by creating a text that is vivid yet ambiguous. Like the projective testing discussed in the previous chapter, this kind of imagery is a perfect trigger for fantasy and the reader’s movement response in it, which creates or completes the narrative. Finally, in a larger sense, these texts address the problem of rapid social change to a certain degree by drawing on images of ideal, unchanging, and, hence, static times and places. The *ḥayyot*, ‘Ezekiel’s wheels,’ in a single

of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988], 5). A full exploration of the psychology behind the Rabbinic use of Ezekiel’s vision lies well beyond the scope of this study, but Halperin’s work in *Faces* as well as in *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980), and especially chapters two, three, and four of Lieb’s *Visionary Mode*, are three excellent places to begin such an investigation.

³¹ The theological and psychological effects of this kind of verbal distancing has been well-commented upon. See Geo Widengren, *Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets* (Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1948), 118; Lieb, *Visionary Mode*, 38–39; Davis, *Scroll*, 84–85; and Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 52–53.

³² Lieb, *Visionary Mode*, 38. John Kutsko also suggests that the wheels imply the motility of the divine presence, i.e., that the *kēbôd*-ὕμνη is not limited to the land of Israel or the Temple in Jerusalem, and therefore also represents the movement from judgment (absence, Exile) to restoration (Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 91).

(yet multiplied) symbol, capture the whole of the traumatic problem at hand and instigate its solution.

The sequence of events appears as such: Ezekiel resides in exile, still stunned by the events that have transpired and God's ongoing absence in the world. The tension experienced by God's absence within the Exile, John Kutsko argues, gives rise to the prophet's visions:

Ezekiel's attempt to mediate between God's boundlessness and God's real presence is the theological dilemma that motivates the striking nature of the *kābôd*-visions.... Thus Ezekiel's description of the divine *kābôd* stresses the reality of God's absence from the Temple and his presence in the people's midst.³³

Suddenly, he has a visionary experience of the Divine Presence that results in a call to prophesy. He is forced to ingest a scroll of "laments and moaning and woe" (קנים והגה והי), which almost completely subsumes his own autonomous personality (Ezek 2:10–3:3; cf. Jer 1:9; 15:16; Rev 10:8–11). The forceful coaxing by God in feeding Ezekiel the scroll likely indicates some conflict or resistance on the prophet's part, underscoring the result of ego suppression in this act.³⁴ Similar ambivalence is expressed when Ezekiel resists the command to cook on human dung at 4:14, and even more so when God subsequently commands the prophet to speak to the Exiles, only to harden their faces against him and later to strike him dumb except when commanded to speak.³⁵ (See Figure 3)

In that the content of the scroll is negative and mournful, this act of God *giving* such a scroll *to* the prophet can be read as the projective

³³ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 152. In so doing, Kutsko notes, the prophet revisits Israel's past (the wilderness era) while pointing to its future in a way that emphasizes God's presence on earth over his identification with the Temple. In other words, in Ezekiel's Call Vision, the return of YHWH's presence is not only a recovery of the absent God but also of the essence of the lost Temple, which of course becomes reified in the New City at the end of the book.

³⁴ Merkur, "Prophetic Initiation," 63; Davis, *Scroll*, 51–53; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 78. Ezekiel here evokes a cross-cultural model of spirit possession in relation to prophetic state: "According to the theory of possession, the individual loses his personal identity and becomes the embodiment of the possessing spirit, which totally controls him. The two become one, so that the speech and actions of the individual are actually the speech and actions of the spirit" (Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 65).

³⁵ On the relationship of the ingestion of the scroll *qua* text, the contradiction of the dumbness imposition, and Ezekiel's mission to prophesy, see Davis, *Scroll*, 48–58; on the relationship to the Mosaic prophetic tradition in Deuteronomy, wherein God declares that he will place his words in the mouth of a future prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18), see Kohn, *New Heart*, 109.

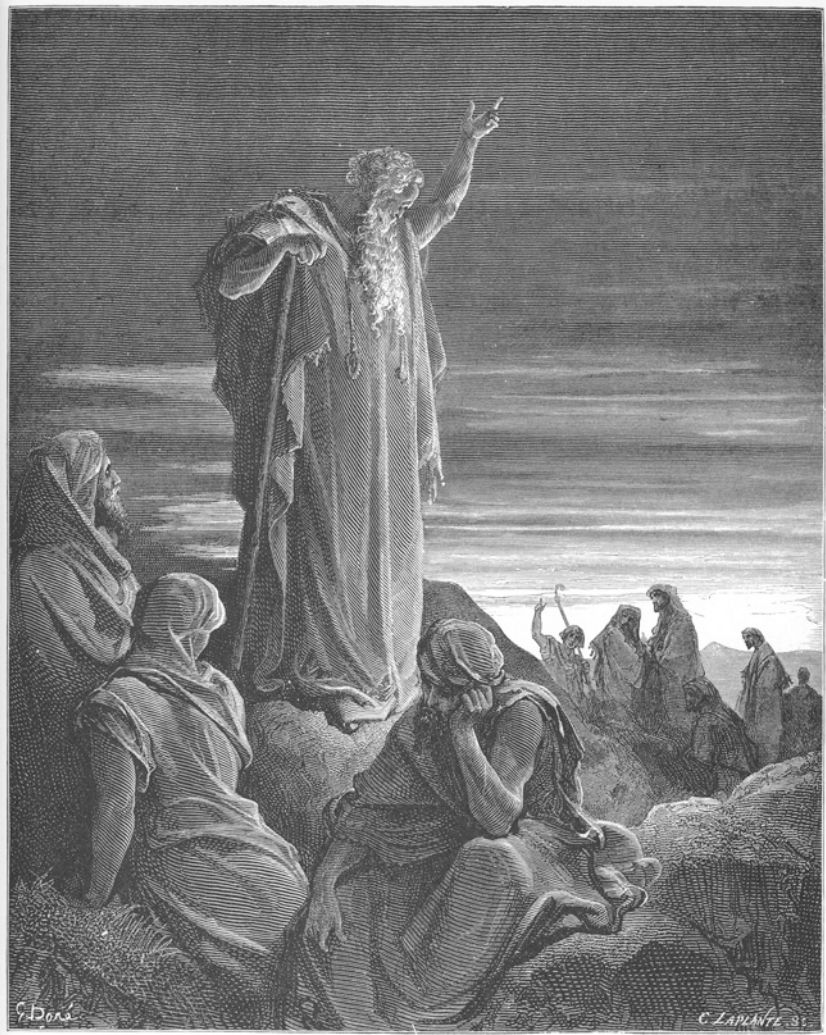


Figure 3: “Ezekiel Prophesying.” From the *Doré Illustrated Bible*, Gustave Doré, 1866.

dissociation, externalization, and introjection of Ezekiel's painful feelings. This psychological process allows the prophet to defend against the overwhelming nature of the feelings (as 'not his') while still expressing and acting on them. There is, in fact, an affective split, whereby the perfectly good YHWH acts as critical agency over and against the perfectly base House of Israel—both halves representing idealized aspects of the prophet's identity and the ambivalence he must have felt towards a God who allowed such tragedy to occur. The effectiveness of ingesting the scroll in suppressing Ezekiel's personality, cementing his identification with YHWH, and displacing his negative emotions onto the House of Israel, supports this reading.³⁶

Then in Ezek 3:14–15 the spirit of the Lord takes Ezekiel up 'bitter' and 'raging,' returning him to where he started—but this time he is 'desolate.'³⁷ The conspicuous introduction of strong emotion at the end of the vision, in contradistinction to the lack of it at its inception, indicates a catharsis through the emergence of the vision and the beginning of the mourning process, including the resolution of melancholic loss of identity and meaning in the world. Recalling the characteristics of the uncanny, we should recognize that in the Call Vision the prophet's God, a long-established and familiar entity, emerges in an alien, frightening way in a new environment—which is to say, the identification with YHWH as the crucial determinant of Ezekiel's existence breaks through the repression barrier in a particularly forceful and symbolic way. It is the initial instance of the return of the repressed.

³⁶ See Merkur, "Prophetic Initiation," 53–59; D. Daschke, "Desolate Among Them: Loss, Fantasy, and Recovery in the Book of Ezekiel," *American Imago* 56 (1999): 112–13, 120.

³⁷ Davis emphasizes the role of these emotional references in reminding Ezekiel's audience of his subordination to YHWH as messenger but not author, here and elsewhere (1:28; 9:8; 11:13), over and above their indicators of his psychological state (Davis, *Scroll*, 58–59). In fact, she asserts, strangely, that they are 'less useful' as such, though one is at a loss as to how she can make that determination. Ezekiel's social role is inextricably tied to and nuanced by the textual/creative evidence of his psychological state. Similarly, concerning the Sign Acts and other symbolic behaviors, Ralph Klein dismisses the notion that there is anything to be benefited from going beyond the literary level with them, as they were either redacted in or else they appear simply "too complex—or even impossible—to have taken place literally" (Klein, *Ezekiel*, 8). Klein's unwillingness even to consider psychological dynamics underlying the text strikes me as recalcitrant, especially for a work in the "Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament" series. He also does not address important literary issues, such as the relationship between authorship and textuality, or between personal experience and communal model—which, to her enormous credit, Davis accomplishes superbly.

The Work of Mourning

From the start the Book of Ezekiel juxtaposes the world of the Exile with the Israelite past. After an obscure date reference (“the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month”), two seemingly unrelated pieces of information are divulged: the prophet sees visions of God in Babylon, and it is the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiakin (Ezek 1:1–2). If Ezekiel, son of Buzi the priest, were deported along with his king in 597, then this vision is his first encounter with the Divine Presence since then. As much as the reign of his king and the Davidic monarchy in general were becoming a distant memory at that point, so too might be the sense that God was active in the lives his people.

God’s first speech defines the people of Israel as unfaithful in the past as well as the present: “Son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day” (2:3). Regarding the presentation of Israelite history in Ezekiel, Ellen Davis says,

For Israel, remembering the past and acknowledging Yahweh are inseparable elements of a complex interaction. Israel is brought to recognize Yahweh through the same kind of restorative acts by which it was first constituted as a nation. These stir Israel’s memory and sense of shame at its own deeds.³⁸

God’s declaration through his prophet demarcates a stark moral stance applied against the nation’s entire history. It, of course, reiterates the plaint of Jeremiah (Jer 7, 11, 44), other prophets, and Deuteronomistic theodicy in general. In this sense, Ezekiel is himself standing in a prophetic tradition that looks askance at the behavior of the Jewish people since the days of the Exodus.³⁹ Yet to convey this condemnation of his fellow Exiles through the performance of mourning behaviors is no coincidence. As compared to mourning as a petitionary activity in the face of disaster, Saul Olyan observes,

³⁸ Davis, *Scroll*, 115.

³⁹ See Keith Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets* (London: SCM, 1975), 48–61; Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 91–109.

mourning as described in non-petitionary calamity contexts must have other primary purposes. These might include marking those affected by the disaster off from others who are unaffected, and creating a ritual context in which they can enact and communicate their sorrow, shame, and personal or corporate diminishment as well as create, affirm, or modify social relationships.⁴⁰

While the other Exiles are certainly not 'unaffected' by the tragedy that has befallen Judah, the intent and effect of the Book of Ezekiel thus far in the text has been to distinguish the prophet's experience from those around him, isolating him while levying charges that the Exiles are 'hard-hearted' and deserve their punishment. Of course, the reader soon sees that this is a false distinction. Everything that Ezekiel goes through is a model for his fellow Exiles, meant to accuse, remind, reprimand, and, finally, lead to renewal.

The Sign Acts

The cathartic event of the Call Vision is the initiation of the healing process for Ezekiel, but the true work of mourning, it seems, begins with the Sign Acts of Ezek 3:22–6:14. Recalling Freud's description of the "distinguishing mental features of melancholia,"⁴¹ in these acts we see vividly:

- *painful dejection, cessation of interest of outside world*—3:24–25 (confinement to house)
- *inhibition of all activity*—3:24–26; 4:4–8 (dumbness, confinement to house, lying on side)
- *lowering of self-regarding feelings, self-revilings*—4:12 (food to be cooked on human excrement)⁴²

⁴⁰ Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 98.

⁴¹ These 'symptoms' also resemble much of what psychologists today would call 'post-traumatic stress disorder' (PTSD), which also demonstrates the melancholic characteristic of the compulsion to repeat the experience of the original trauma. On reading Ezekiel's experiences as PTSD, see Daniel Smith-Christopher, "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587–539)," in *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (ed. James Scott; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 19; and Johanna Stiebert, *The Exile and the Prophet's Wife* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2005), 98.

⁴² On the appearance of debasement and humiliation in mourning rites, see Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*, 34 n. 18; Feldman, *Defilement and Mourning*, 94–95; and E. Kutsch, "'Trauerbräuche' and 'Selbstminderungsriten' im Alten Testament" in

- *expectation of punishment*—4:4–6; 5:1–4 (lying on side, burning and cutting of hair)⁴³

While Israelite prophets traditionally backed up their words with their bodies, one can most clearly see in these chapters that the rage against the House of Israel is directed at the prophet in reality, with Israel receiving punishment only symbolically.⁴⁴ In fact, Ezek 4:4–6 explicitly states that the prophet is bearing the punishment of the Houses of Israel and Judah.

Greenberg's commentary on this section supports this view. In his discussion of the Sign Acts, he determines that Ezekiel's rejection, desolation, dumbness, and confinement all have the same cause and extent in time, which would be true in melancholia. In fact, he notes that "concurrent with Ezekiel's release from 'dumbness' is the second period of his prophecy—the predictions of Israel's restoration," an observation that squares precisely with the notion that cessation of mourning comes as part and parcel with new structure building and the ability to love again.⁴⁵

With the explicitness of the identity between signifier and signified here—the siege is "a sign for the House of Israel" (4:3); he bears the years of iniquity on his sides, immobile (4:4–6)—the symbolic identification and the aggressive impulses at work in these acts are difficult to deny. Greenberg indicates the prophet "represents a battered, beset,

Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament (ed. L. Schmidt and K. Eberlein; BZAW 168; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 87–88, 90.

⁴³ On shaving rites and mourning in the Hebrew Bible, especially among the prophets, see Saul Olyan, "What Do Shaving Rites Accomplish and What Do They Signal in Biblical Ritual Contexts?" *JBL* 117 (1998): 616–17. It is worth noting, too, that Ezekiel shaves his head despite the priestly prohibition against doing so (Lev 21:5). As shaving, a temporary change, often underscores liminal periods in peoples' lives, the act here has a triple meaning—to express the liminal state of mourning, to indicate a time when the usual purity prohibitions are not in force (cf. Ezek 4:12–15), and to demonstrate that Ezekiel's personality has been subsumed by his mission (cf. Davis, *Scroll*, 71).

⁴⁴ Davis, *Scroll*, 70; cf. 1 Kg 22:11; 2 Kg 13:14–19; Isa 8:1–4; 20:2–4; Jer 27:2; 28:10–11; 32:6–15.

⁴⁵ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 121. The ability and inability to love is a constant theme in Ezek, from the early description of the rebellious House of Israel as 'brazen-faced and toughhearted' and the prophet's hardening in response (1:4; 2:8), through the restoration language of 'stone hearts' being replaced by 'hearts of flesh' (11:18–21).

enfeebled object of wrath": Israel.⁴⁶ Even ritualistic shaving traditionally symbolized surrender of power or personality. In sum,

The common feature of all these symbolic acts is the affliction of the prophet—by scant food, by prolonged immobility, by the degradation of shaving off all the head-hair (cf. II Sam 10:4–5). In view of the ambiguous role of the prophet in these acts—now he seems to be the people, now God, now himself—one is inclined to see in the symbols a mixture of identification with the impending suffering of the people...of sympathy with God's passion, and a deflection upon himself of anger at the hostile people for having driven him into withdrawal.⁴⁷

Although Greenberg approaches the text at a more manifest level than a psychoanalytic interpretation would, his comments on the possible motivations underlying the Sign Acts, their meanings, and their emotional content are completely consistent with the framework of melancholic loss applied throughout this study. The creative but almost pathologically abusive Faithless Bride metaphor in Ezek 16 reflects the same rage as the Sign Acts but fortunately for the prophet (and the women in his life) it is expressed in a literary form and not in the earlier 'street theater'—a type of public display to which the Sign Acts have been compared.

The Abominations in the Temple

In Ezekiel's Call Vision, YHWH himself is recovered, establishing the unmistakable presence of the divine on earth again (though outside of the Promised Land) and initiating the direct experience of another reality.⁴⁸ In the Temple Vision (chs. 8–10), the other components are recaptured (Temple, city, people), but the vision distorts their representation to Ezekiel. In this visionary sequence, God's angels ultimately destroy the Temple, its idolaters, and the rest of the city—a destructive response to the memory of a loss that is typical of melancholia. Deguid notes,

⁴⁶ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 61.

⁴⁷ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 126–27.

⁴⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1:119*; cf. Ps 137:4: "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" The appearance of the *kābôd* outside of the Holy Land was not only unprecedented, but apparently was considered something of a scandal among the Rabbis (Davis, *Scroll*, 13; cf. Rashi, *Mek. Pisha* 1).

By describing the Temple as totally defiled through the acts of people committed in the service of idolatrous cults, Ezekiel declares the people no better than Manasseh—in spite of the fact that they may have sinned in private, without benefit of official clergy.... *[H]is purpose was not to preserve historical data but to convict Judah of cultic sin and thus provide a theological rationale for the destruction of Jerusalem.*⁴⁹

‘Observing’ the wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem defiling the Temple with non-Yahwistic cult worship prepares Ezekiel for and justifies to him their subsequent decimation, both theologically and psychologically. Its message stands at odds with the deepest Jewish expectations, that the Temple to which Ezekiel was once so devoted is actually the source of Israel’s downfall.

The Temple appears cluttered with sacrilegious images and foreign practices. Like the Call Vision, the images found in Ezekiel’s tour of the Temple have some familiar referents, including the cult of the fertility goddess Asherah (8:3), introduced by Israel’s early kings; Egyptian burial chambers (8:10–11), Egyptian influence being pervasive at several times during Israel’s history, including the time just before the Exile; the god associated with agrarian death and rebirth, Tammuz (8:14), appearing in a variety of forms all over the ancient world; and sun worship (8:16), which was long established in Israel and its environs, with the word for sun, *šemeš*, appearing in town (Beth-shemesh) and personal names (Samson).⁵⁰ Greenberg reads the images on the walls as evoking Ezekiel’s current cultural situation with a reference to the Ishtar Gate of Babylon.⁵¹

Like any good dream, the Temple Vision seems overdetermined, not reducible to its allusions and drawing from one’s cultural reservoir as well as recent personal experiences. There is an unnerving, uncanny vagueness at some places that suggests more than it shows, giving the impression of things half-glimpsed in darkness. (For example, on the Temple wall there are “creeping things, and loathsome animals, and all the idols of the House of Israel” [8:10b].) Some of the abominations even exist in secret, concealed in clandestine parts of the Temple. At first barred from this hidden knowledge, Ezekiel is ordered to burrow through a wall to discover them (8:7–12). It leaves the impression that there is more behind the revelation than is shown, that as stark and

⁴⁹ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 68; emphasis mine.

⁵⁰ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 53–56.

⁵¹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 1–20, 168–73; see also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:236–45.

critical these images may be, censorship has substantially altered their targets while suggesting even deeper secrets at their heart. The hole in the wall and Ezekiel's requirement to dig through (or next to it) are therefore highly significant clues for the interpretation of the Temple scene as a whole.⁵² Penetrating a wall in this way represents the crossing of a threshold, but only with resistance. When the prophet arrives on the other side, he encounters a complete, even wanton rejection of YHWH in his own House, which is followed by YHWH's own command to consume the Temple, the city, and its inhabitants in fire. Psychologically, the act of digging into the chamber symbolizes a 'breakthrough,' a subversion of the repression barrier, exposing a tumultuous inner psychic world: ambivalence and hostility towards YHWH, then righteous, uninhibited rage at this lack of devotion. The rage then seeks to eradicate its source by destroying the idolaters.

One indication that the original censorship conceals an anger against YHWH is found in v. 12: "[The Lord] said to me, 'Do you see, man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in his image-chamber, for they say, YHWH does not see us. YHWH has forsaken the land,'" including its inhabitants.⁵³ The phrase 'image-chamber' (חדרי משכית; 'room of images,' NRSV) is an odd but evocative one. Greenberg notes the term *משכית* is associated in the priestly writings with idolatrous contexts (Lev 26:1; Num 33:52).⁵⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp relates the scene to a pro-Egyptian set of Judean leaders enlisting the support of foreign deities; Bruce Vawter and Leslie Hoppe see Egyptian influence as well.⁵⁵ Most interesting for psychological purposes, Halperin derives the translation 'wicked imagination' or, more loosely, 'perverted fantasies' from the associations and contexts of the previous priestly uses of the term.⁵⁶

In any case, the phrase connotes a secret but personally powerful reaction against YHWH, in connection with his 'forsaking the land.'

⁵² The textual and conceptual problems of this narrative sequence are not easily resolved, but on the whole do not influence the psychoanalytic interpretation of scene. On the issues it raises and possible solutions see Ackerman, *Every Green Tree*, 42, 67–69.

⁵³ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 165.

⁵⁴ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 170.

⁵⁵ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 55; Vawter and Hoppe, *New Heart*, 66–67.

⁵⁶ Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 63–64. Intriguingly, the Septuagint indicates a 'hidden bedroom' [τῷ κοιτῶνι τῷ κρυπτῷ]—capturing the sense of taboo in flouting parental dictates that modern readers may bring to this scene.

Each Elder is aware that his actions would be despicable to YHWH, but he continues with them anyway. Yet each man remains essentially thrice-hidden from his God. They believe he has left the land, and so cannot see them; they work in the dark; and they operate alone in their concealed image rooms. If God is not in the land, they will flout his laws, but only in secret. The irony, of course, is that YHWH sees everything they do anyway. This passive-aggressive stand against their God conveys their hostility over his dictates and their joy of being free of them, while in equal part demonstrating the fear and guilt that cause them to hide, not only from the Lord, but also from each other. Wondering why these idolaters work in the dark, Greenberg suggests, "Perhaps they are paradoxically ashamed of what they are doing."⁵⁷

This study's deeper psychological reading, noting the various permutations on the theme of concealment—a vision of the Temple with walled-off rooms in the dark—finds nothing paradoxical about such behavior. Ezekiel's melancholic resentment of his loss is projected in fantasy onto the Elders, and shame hardly need be paradoxical when actions are ambivalent.⁵⁸ The language of concealment symbolizes the depths of its repression, but its revelation to Ezekiel causes him to terminate his identification with the cultic and the political institutions in Jerusalem while safely expressing his anger at doing so in the mouths of others. However, after the fantasized destruction of the Temple occurs, Ezekiel is able to re-enact the scene of burrowing through the wall in public in ch. 12, as a sign act concerning the Exile. Partially concealed elements still remain—he digs in the dark but in the people's sight; he covers his own face, so as not to see the land (12:6)—but the shift symbolized by his burrowing into idolatry in Jerusalem then burrowing out to Exile demonstrates the unconscious at work in reconciling the present with the past.

Through his symbolic acts and visions, Ezekiel's rage is carefully and creatively structured to allow the priest to sever his attachment to his former homeland and cultural surroundings. Melancholic fantasies express the wish to destroy the lost object, but can only do so when the anger is displaced onto another, less threatening object, such as the self or its substitute. Of course, the fact that the loved object is lost is repressed, so the destructive urge actively destroys the object in

⁵⁷ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 170–71.

⁵⁸ So too concludes Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 59.

fantasy as a defense against passive abandonment. Thus Ezekiel envisions God's destruction of Jerusalem in Ezek 9–10. Similarly, Joseph Blenkinsopp suggests that the destroying angels of the Hebrew Bible

might be thought of as a projection of the negative energy of the deity, the anger, grief, and frustration generated by unreciprocated love. The Hebrew Bible never hesitates to speak of God in terms of human emotion, and Ezekiel expresses more of this than almost any other biblical author.⁵⁹

Disparagement and a destructive impulse are still externalized through YHWH's rage (8:18; 9:5–6, 9–10). Fantasized destruction of the object is carried out in the future—as is indeed the actual destruction of Jerusalem (33:21–22). The prophetic character of the destruction underscores the time element in the process of recognizing and letting go of the melancholic attachment to the lost object. At the time of the vision, Ezekiel can only begin to realize that his worldview has been irreparably shattered. The continuous return to Israel's glorious and not-so-glorious past, real or imagined, allows the dispossessed priest to mourn his lost history and nation. His equally constant degradation of his tradition, possibly reaching its vitriolic apex in ch. 16, separates him from the institutions of his past until they are no longer narcissistic extensions of himself but distinct and autonomous memories.

If the vision's purpose is to sever Ezekiel's attachment to his past, it does so by allowing the present to intrude anachronistically into his recollection of Israel's history in the form of idolatrous worship. Counter to many more literal-minded scholars, it is useful to assert that the key to the Book of Ezekiel is to understand that the prophet reports 'things that never happened.' Notes Deguid, "Indeed, it seems sometimes to be forgotten that what Ezekiel saw was a *vision*: a stylized presentation of reality intended to make a particular point."⁶⁰ It is in these chapters' depiction of the abominations in the Temple and the subsequent decimation of the idolaters that the movement from melancholia to mourning in Ezekiel truly begins.

Movement remains a key word here, as this vision, a true melancholic fantasy of rage against a lost object, is based on the movement

⁵⁹ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 57.

⁶⁰ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 67. This point is affirmed by Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (trans. M. Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 428–32; and Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 45. "Things that Never Happened" is Halperin's title for the chapter in *Seeking Ezekiel* that examines the Temple Vision.

through the Temple from abomination to abomination. Recall that the movement response in projective testing produces the narrational, plot-like structure of fantasies. The four stations of idolatry (Ezek 8:5, 11, 14, and 16), concluding in the inner court of the Temple, appear to represent the totality of Israel's apostasy—and, psychologically, the complete re-evaluation of the prophet's attachment to the people he left behind, 'from all sides,' as it were.⁶¹ In fact, God presents each station's idolatry as an instance of revelation, in much the same way as the various heavens or cosmic spaces are revealed in apocalypses featuring tours of heaven (1 Enoch, 3 Baruch). This aspect underscores the notion that in such a progression, Ezekiel confronts highly unpleasant 'truths' about the old world with which he still identifies, but in an alien and distorted manner. The movement in fantasy, including the whisking away to Jerusalem (Ezek 8:3; cf. 3:12–15), comes in marked contrast to the immobility the Sign Acts forced on him in everyday life. Thus the transitional space afforded by the vision allows the prophet to 'return' to Jerusalem and 'see' its leaders betraying YHWH and Israel. Such a sight forces him to conclude that his attachment to this environment must end. And so it does.

In the vision of the Temple's destruction, the response of movement is no longer the prophet's but God's agents'. This shift represents another example of the displacement and dissociation of the most negative impulses resulting from Ezekiel's experience onto others; except for a brief intercessory speech (almost a mere rhetorical question, really) at 9:8, the prophet remains passive as the slaughter occurs (9:6–7; cf. 11:13). The work of the executioners begins with the Elders before the Temple, moves on to the Temple itself, then continues in the city. At that point, Ezekiel fears that God will leave no remnant, and cries out to intercede.⁶²

⁶¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:235; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 54; Vawter and Hoppe, *New Heart*, 65–69. We should note the irony of the women 'weeping for Tammuz' at 8:14, the third station. These Israelite women are depicted as mourning for a god who, by its own mythology, will live again, completely unaware of the devastation the loss of their true God on account of such practices about to be wrought on them. I argue below that later (24:22–24) the Exiles will be prohibited from mourning to prevent a facile recovery of the old ways of worship (i.e., akin to 'weeping for Tammuz') and hence drive them, individually and collectively, to create new and better bonds to their God within their society.

⁶² The exclamations here and, almost identically, at Ezek 11:13, fall into the short list of moments when Ezekiel appears to speak for himself. We have already noted that he balks at cooking on human dung; later he is allowed to address his community as

This concentric movement indicates a different kind of completeness from the tour of the abominations in the Temple. Starting from the source or center of his attachment to the city—its people, specifically people he knows and who represent its society (8:11)—the destroyers move outwards to the Temple structure itself, as the monumental Zionistic symbol, then despoil the rest of the city, both its human citizenry and its architectural structure (9:7aß: "fill the courts with corpses"). This pattern of desolation, relating as it does the human and the architectural in terms of loss, occasionally takes on an openly metaphorical association in the Book of Ezekiel (chs. 16, 22–23). But the starkness of its symbolic reality reappears without any mitigation in Ezek 24, as the death of Ezekiel's wife and the impending fall of the Temple are inextricably linked as a sign for the Exiles. Finally, the decimation complete, YHWH takes leave of the Temple structure, having freed himself and thus Ezekiel and the Exiles from the obligation to preserve it as it was.

Interestingly, Ezekiel has also chosen not to implicate the priesthood—including himself—directly in the Temple abuses. If the son of Buzi the priest were accusing the priesthood of having engaged in such acts in recent years, he ought to indicate a measure of self-reproach.⁶³ Instead, he blames a group of Elders and the people of Israel in general for bringing on God's wrath. As it happens, affixing blame on the party that is 'truly' to blame is moot, even if possible:

[T]he historicity of Ezekiel's observations is not of definitive importance: we are interested in establishing not who was *actually* responsible for the cultic abuses which terminated in the exile, but rather upon whom Ezekiel placed the blame for those abuses. It is this perception on the part of Ezekiel which is of decisive importance for our argument that there is a connection between those identified as responsible for the abuses in Ezekiel's oracles of judgment and those pushed to the margins of Ezekiel's vision of the future.⁶⁴

The prophet thus attempts to persuade the Exilic community, including the Elders, to put the ways of the past behind them. The

himself following the death of his wife. Zimmerli, following von Rad and others, notes that in these abrupt acts of intercession Ezekiel truly fulfills the prophetic role (*Ezekiel* 1:249; see also Davis, *Scroll*, 58–59).

⁶³ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 63, 68–71. Ezekiel's criticisms of the priesthood are either not connected to the Temple (7:26; 22:26) or are concerned with the ritual structure of the future (40:46; 44:10–16).

⁶⁴ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 68 n. 60; emphasis in original.

political arrangement of the New City envisioned in chs. 40–48 represents the projective extension of these concerns into the time of the Restoration.

Ezekiel 11, a parallel version of ch. 9, is interesting for another reason.⁶⁵ At the end of this vision a curious event occurs:

Now, while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. I fell on my face and cried out in a loud voice, “Ah, Lord God, you are making [or: will you make] an end to the remnant of Israel[?]” (11:13b)

The significance of this note has been greatly debated, but I will follow Greenberg and Halperin among others in emphasizing that this death occurred within the context of a vision, and so its meaning—if any remains discernible to modern readers—must also derive from its visionary context, and its juxtaposition with the previous vision of the destruction of the Temple.⁶⁶

If we bear in mind the degree to which Ezekiel, throughout the book, seeks to make the collective personal and *vice versa*, this incident becomes more coherent. Ch. 11 recapitulates ch. 9 from the standpoint of an individual death rather than a collective massacre, with two alterations. In the first vision, God’s executioners fill the city with corpses (9:7b); in the second, God accuses the House of Israel of doing the same (11:6).⁶⁷ The second alteration concerns the nature of the death. Ezekiel 9 presents the devastation openly, as divine vengeance. Ezekiel 11 gives no clue as to the cause of Pelatiah’s death; it just happens.

Following Ezek 9, in which the devastation is divine and thorough, ch. 11 places the responsibility of death back squarely on the house of Israel and suggests that the implications of this guilt will manifest individual by individual.⁶⁸ As in the first vision, the second has death

⁶⁵ On the relationship between the two visions, see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:257; Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 1–20, 199.

⁶⁶ Cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 1–20, 188–89; Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 68–73.

⁶⁷ 9:7b: “Fill the courts [of the Temple] with corpses’ ... [and so] they killed in the city.”

(ומלאו את-החצרות חללים צאו ויצאו והכו בעיר:)

11:6: “You have multiplied your corpses in this city, and you have filled its streets with corpses.”

(הרביתם חלליכם בעיר הזאת ומלאתם חוצתיה חלל:)

⁶⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:259; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 62. On the mutual emphasis in ch. 9 on the people of Israel’s collective and individual responsibility for the city’s destruc-

come initially to the lay leaders. Interestingly, though, whereas Ezek 8 attempts to saddle lay leaders—even one by name—and their idolatry with the responsibility for God's wrath, Ezek 11 accuses them of wicked counsel but reminds the whole nation of its deadly culpability, while idolatry specifically is not mentioned.

Ezekiel 11, then, can be understood as a broader vision, socially, than the one in Ezek 9. It is somewhat more vague in terms of its content, and even less spectacular in its depiction of God's actions. However, following such an all-encompassing vision of terror, it delivers its own impact by reversing the thrust of the vision from execution to expectation; from revelation to mystery; from collective punishment to collective guilt; and from indictment of some specific group of leaders to the death of one of them. By these means the prospect of fantasy activity increases as the uncertainty and the potential threat of the situation increases as well. Ezekiel 11's prospect for the future remains as bleak as that of ch. 9, but it primes an audience to regard it not for its catastrophic imagery, as in ch. 9, but for the everyday simplicity of its threat: exposing individual culpability in the national crime.

"I Am About To Take Away The Delight of Your Eyes"

Significantly, the collective and personal foci of these two visions come together in the prophecy announcing the death of Ezekiel's wife and, subsequently, the imminent fall of the actual Temple in Ezek 24:15–27. God refers to both identically, as **מחמד עיניך** (in the second-person singular), "the delight of your eyes." God prohibits both Ezekiel and the Exiles from mourning their losses; in fact Ezekiel's actions are explicitly a sign for the people to follow. Psychologically, the rage that underlies the inability to mourn is manifested in Ezekiel's visions as examined above. It would even be reasonable to take the declaration about the impending death of the prophet's wife as another fantasy, completely of a piece with the playing out of the destruction of the Temple in the prophetic vision prior to its fall in actuality. Halperin associates the inability of the prophet to mourn his wife with the misogynistic rage expressed elsewhere in the text, especially chs. 16–23. He both loves his wife and wishes for her death, resulting in the

tion, see Paul Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 51; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 61–66; and Kaufmann, *Religion*, 439.

anticipation of her death 'fulfilled' by YHWH's announcement, while at the same time belying his paralyzed emotional state that makes ordinary mourning impossible.⁶⁹ Thus the importance of the connection between the wife's death and the destruction of the Temple derives not from its proximity to the Temple's actual fall but to its recapitulation of the destruction fantasy of 'the delight of his eyes.' Even so, it's clear from the matter-of-fact declaration of the wife's death that the rage that fueled the first fantasy as well as the vitriolic misogyny in chs. 16–23 has dissipated.

Furthermore, the fantasy has become less grandiose and all-encompassing; it is not directed at the Temple, the priesthood, the Exiles, and all of Israel's past. It is intimate and personal, directed at the one person whose death would feel like the equivalent of losing his physical and spiritual home. The movement from the Temple Vision to the 'death' of Ezekiel's wife on the eve of the actual destruction of the Temple indicates that as the rage has burned itself out, the prophet is beginning to resituate himself in the real world of Exile, among his cohort of deportees, including his own beloved.⁷⁰

On that note, *socially*, the prohibition against mourning here essentially becomes a prohibition against *remembering*, at least remembering the past in a certain traditional way that is no longer tenable. From this angle, one may ask, why impose a prohibition against the normal, culturally dictated steps of mourning, as spelled out to Ezekiel at 24:17 and reiterated to the Exiles at 24:22–23? Mourning essentially works to rewrite the narrative of one's past to include, without rupture, recent traumatic events in it. Cultures do mourn, but the cultural process can be aided and accelerated by the introduction of a new, compelling, shared storyline. Socially, the purpose of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry is to prepare his fellow Exiles to give up their attachment to their former Temple and the security it represented. The claims against the Elders in the Temple and the vision of its destruction were steps in chipping away at what remained of the old Zionistic facade in the memory of the Exiles; elsewhere, Ezekiel's tirades against the monarchy, including both recent and distant kings, and against the general

⁶⁹ Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel*, 179–81.

⁷⁰ Stiebert's *Prophet's Wife* intriguingly combines a theological and psychoanalytic reflection on the significance of this passage with a *midrash*—a kind of fantasy of her own—to recover the lost and silent wife of the text, who appears only as she is taken away.

character of Israel as a nation since its inception achieve the same effect.⁷¹ Thus when the fall of the sanctuary becomes an impending reality, though it is still horribly shocking—as though a husband has lost ‘the delight of his eyes’—the followers of Ezekiel stand ready to accept a new vision of the future, for they have already been given a new vision of the past.

Apart from the visionary genre, other literary forms are often employed in the text to reframe traditional socio-political relationships in light of a changed world, such as the metaphors of cities as women in Ezek 16 and 23, for instance, or the allegory of the Two Eagles and the Vine in ch. 17, or the lamentation for the princes of Israel in ch. 19. In fact, the Book of Ezekiel frequently uses the lamentation form to set the stage for a political entity’s comeuppance, especially in the oracles against the nations issued in Ezek 25–32.⁷² The lamentation is naturally employed as a standardized form for mourning, but in Ezekiel it is closely associated with the prophetic proclamations of doom.⁷³ The use of the lament form here reaches significantly beyond its role in the continuity of the theme of loss throughout the book, for in its adaptation to the oracular form, it expresses a subversive use of the past, one that aims to countermand its subject’s expectations of the future. The oracles against the nations continue this process in a negative way for the nations, but in a positive way, ultimately, for the House of Israel. When all has come to pass, God’s chosen people will emerge stronger than their neighbors, including Egypt, against whom the prophet devotes four full chapters of lamentations and oracles (Ezek 29–32). The sequence concludes with a perfunctory account of Jerusalem’s fall (33:21–22); then the focus of the text turns to restoration.

The impact of the text as it stands, in terms of the healing process, accentuates the movement outward into larger and more complex social realms as the work of mourning allows the prophet to become

⁷¹ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 33–43.

⁷² On the use and function of laments in prophetic oracles against the nations, see John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles about the Nations* (SOTSMS; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate), 2004; on the oracles in Ezek, see especially 39–76.

⁷³ See John W. Weavers, ed., *Ezekiel* (The New Century Bible Commentary Series; London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), 21, on the adaptation of the lament form to the oracular in Ezek; see also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2:201.

more engaged with the outside world again.⁷⁴ Still in all, part of the impetus in this direction undoubtedly results from the prohibition against mourning the dual losses in ch. 24. From this section on, the relationship between YHWH and wayward Israel ceases to emphasize the dualism of the righteous versus the wicked. Instead it focuses on the alliance of God and his restored people over and against the other nations—expressed most vividly in the vision of Gog’s invasion (chs. 38–39).

The report of Jerusalem’s fall punctuates this section of the text. Subsequently, the reader learns that the night before, Ezekiel’s muteness ended. With its cessation, the last of the prophet’s melancholic symptoms, one that has plagued him since the onset of his mission, ends. The deepest wounds have healed. Now the final aspect of the work of mourning can begin: the restructuring of a new worldview and identity so the Exiles can live, and love God, in the future.

Recovery in the Future

After the Temple’s fall is finally announced, the tone of Ezekiel’s prophecy undergoes a distinct change. Restorative imagery comes hand in hand with Israel’s vilification, and the promise of an ideal future begins to recur with some frequency. The indication of a return to a Davidic monarchy, at first stated simply but explicitly (Ezek 34:23) becomes elaborated, a more and more fantastic and deeply transformative picture of things to come as the text progresses, until bodily resurrection becomes the best image for the destiny of the House of Israel (37:1–14), as the political restoration of Israel and Judah among the nations is assured (37:15–39:29). Of course, the return to former glory will not also involve a return to the ways of the past. Ezekiel 36:25–28 states:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness; and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and I will make you follow my statutes and be careful

⁷⁴ Zimmerli proposes that the original location of 33:21–22 came after 24:24, to conclude the community’s anticipation of the city’s fall (*Ezekiel* 2:191), in which case the announcement would not sound so nonchalant.

to observe my commandments. Then you will dwell in the land I gave to your ancestors, and you will be my people and I will be your God.

Straddling the line between other- and this-worldly expectations expressed in the second half of the book, the chapters concerned with restoration (Ezek 34–48) exhibit a utopian mindset more clearly than their content indicates. By highlighting the utopian and fantastic elements, we can discern a kind of resolution in the conflicts of the past, one that, not coincidentally, would serve to draw the imagined readership together and extend to that community the hope that that which has been lost will return with even more promise than before.

Idealized, Utopian, and Healing Elements

Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 36:8–15 declare a recovery of aspects of former times but do not explicitly indicate any perfect society will emerge with them. However, each does envisage a complete reversal of Israel's present status and, to an extent, idealize the past and its return. Hence the prophet's underlying attitude toward the past has moved beyond its vilification phase. He now recalls a specific aspect of that history as flawless and worth recovering, for it will perfectly structure the future for his people. The former passage states, in the midst of an extended pastoral metaphor, that he will set up his servant David as a shepherd, who will feed them and be a prince among them. The latter passage indicates that their population will be multiplied, the cities will be inhabited, and the ruins will be rebuilt, "as in former times, and I will do more good to you than ever before" (36:11b). Thus the expectation increases beyond ordinary repopulating and rebuilding. What this new life will entail is left unsaid, but the utopian seed is planted, in both cases appealing to the idea of a past that was better than now but which will exist in an even more perfect form in the future.

The 'New Heart' passage, cited above, pushes the social ideal even further, as all of God's statutes and commandments will presumably be followed to the letter, as the transformation from stone to flesh will allow a heart to do what is right without falling back into sin. However, Davis, arguing with Yehezkel Kaufmann's assessment that New Heart means that the individual will be constitutionally incapable of sin, states that Ezekiel here

envisions, not a new creation which eliminates the element of willful obedience, but rather a radical act of forgiveness which frees Israel from the burden, though not of the memory, of the past and renders it capable

of hearing, of forming new habits, and of entering into a new relationship with Yahweh.⁷⁵

This distinction is significant in that as a healing metaphor, a heart without the ability to sin remains as arrested as the prophet Ezekiel was having swallowed the scroll. It is the positive aspect of the relationship of forgiveness—meaning to let go of the past without forgetting it—that makes the transformation so important and powerful.

As in 34:25–29, the land will reflect the prosperity this new arrangement will produce—agriculture will be abundant, there will be no famine. In fact, those who see the former wasteland will say, “This land that was desolate [הַנְּשֹׁמֶה] is like the Garden of Eden” (36:35). But as with the previous citations, thus far the realization of the political aspect has been left vague, suggesting only simple wish-fulfillment in fantasies of a better future. In this last passage, tellingly, the desire to return to the paradise of Genesis betrays the strength of the wish, and the placement of words of awe—or envy?—in the mouths of passersby, presumably non-Israelites, reveals its social dimension, the need for the recovery to be seen and acknowledged by others.

The prophet’s visionary mode returns in Ezek 37–39 and with it the transitional work of fantasy. It does so at “a moment after all the illusions about Judah’s future ended and before the significant hope for restoration was stirring among the exiles.”⁷⁶ The two visions of Ezek 37 use vivid imagery to indicate the explicit expectation of perfect restoration. In one, human skeletons are literally re-covered with sinews, flesh, and skin, then are given breath at Ezekiel’s command (37:7–10). In the other, Judah and Israel (Ephraim) are represented by two sticks joined together in the prophet’s hand, about which God states,

No longer shall they be two nations, and no longer shall they be divided as two kingdoms. They shall no longer defile themselves with their idols and detestable things, or any of their transgressions, for I will save them from all the apostasies which they committed and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people and I shall be their God. (37:22b–23)

⁷⁵ Davis, *Scroll*, 116; cf. Ezek 18:31. Greenberg also follows Kaufmann on this point, emphasizing that God’s name must never again suffer such disgrace, which “entails the curtailment of human freedom” (Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37* [The Anchor Bible Commentary; New York: Doubleday, 1997], 735). Interestingly, following this position, Greenberg views the restoration to come not as a gracious reconciliation between God and his people, but as a constraint imposed on them to preserve his standing among the nations.

⁷⁶ Vawter and Hoppe, *New Heart*, 166.

This utterance continues in the same vein, repeating the Davidic promise of 34:23 at 37:24 and the habitation promise of 36:8–12 at 37:25, while proclaiming that God's people will dwell in the ancestral land 'forever' (עַד-עוֹלָם), David will be prince 'for eternity' (לְעוֹלָם), and God will make an 'everlasting' (עוֹלָם) covenant of peace with his people.

As Vawter and Hoppe describe it, "Beginning with [37:24] there is a subtle but clear shift from the theme of unity to that of *permanence*."⁷⁷ Then, to punctuate the impact of the largess of ancient social cornerstones returned to Israel, YHWH declares,

I shall set my sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling will be with them; and I shall be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel when my sanctuary is in their midst forever. (37:26b–28)

In contrast to the first Temple (and Jeremiah's warnings about it) the new Temple will endure forever. The envisioned recovery expressed in this statement is dual, in that it promises the viable return of both the Temple structure and the belief in it as eternal cosmic protection and blessing in the midst of the people. Though Ezek 34 and 36 offer some hope toward repairing the old Israelite worldview, Ezek 37 begins the process in earnest in the transitional space created by the visionary fantasy. Like the Call and Temple Visions, the image of the Valley of Dry Bones startles because it is poignant yet far removed from possibilities or experiences of everyday life. It could hardly depict the sense of individual and communal healing with more force, while the comparatively prosaic, metaphorical vision of the Two Sticks states the ultimate societal result of the recovery: the people forever in the land, covenantally bound and willingly, perfectly obedient to YHWH, with a Davidic king and an eternal Temple to ensure the nation's prosperity on the earth and in the cosmos.

Gog from Magog

Ezekiel 38–39 represents a culmination of all the themes of the book in a single, sustained revenge fantasy; not coincidentally it is the purest 'apocalyptic' section of the text. As the prophet's preoccupation turned outward toward the other nations in chs. 25–32, proclaiming in mock

⁷⁷ Vawter and Hoppe, *New Heart*, 170; emphasis in original.

laments the inevitable downfall of Israel's rivals, it gave way to the softer, hopeful chapters concerning Israel's renewal. Apparently, the rage against Israel had passed, in part because it was directed at other, more distant targets. But the anger expressed so fervently throughout the book, but especially in the Temple Vision and in the metaphor of the Faithless Bride in Ezek 16, is far from dissipated. The correlate to Israel's picture of itself gloriously restored is a picture of the consummation of a future aggressor. Thus the nation may vicariously reverse in fantasy that which it so recently suffered in reality.⁷⁸

"After many days you will be mustered; in the latter years you will come against a land recovered [משובבת] from war," the Lord announces to Gog, of the land of Magog (38:8b). When YHWH moves against this land, the whole earth will shake, from all the created beings (cf. Gen 1:20–27 and Ezek 38:20) to the very structures of the planet, which will collapse. Then the Lord will destroy Gog's army with rain and hailstones, fire and sulfur. In the aftermath, the people of Israel will stoke bonfires with the weapons of their enemy for seven years; and they will spend seven months burying the slain (38:22–39:13). God will restore (אשיב) the 'fortunes of Jacob' when he has gathered Israel from the enemies' lands (39:25–26). In the end, God proclaims he will "never again hide my face" from his people (39:29).

In short, the Vision of Gog from Magog synthesizes, condenses, and repeats the history of Ezekiel's prophetic concerns, except that the displacement of the rage against Israel to rage against other nations is total. Like YHWH in the Call Vision, Gog and his armies appear from the far north, coming like an 'annihilating storm' (שאה), covering the land like a cloud.⁷⁹ God uses Gog as an instrument for his purposes, as he did Nebuchadnezzar, but in this case his purpose is the humiliating destruction of Gog's armies.⁸⁰ The crushing of the wicked hordes

⁷⁸ Wilson argues that Ezekiel's peripheral position vis-à-vis the Exilic social structure may have, in fact, played a role in turning the text towards more identifiably apocalyptic content. As resistance to Ezekiel and/or his supporters-inheritors intensified, they may have withdrawn further from an already tenuous relationship with the rest of society and allowed their most fervent hopes and desires—even the destructive ones, as seen in chs. 38–39—flow onto the page (Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 285–86).

⁷⁹ Cf. Ezek 1:4: "As I looked a raging wind (סערה) came out of the north—a great cloud..." Like the Call Vision and the Vision of the Abominations in the Temple, the dangerous or frightening incident emerges from the north.

⁸⁰ Julie Galambush argues that Gog was, in fact, a cipher for Nebuchadnezzar, and that, as with other apocalyptic adversaries who became enduring symbols of evil—Nero of the Book of Revelation, Antiochus IV of Daniel—the emotional power of the

echoes the scene of the destruction of the city and Temple in Ezek 9–10 and the prophecy of Ezek 11, especially the detail of the rain of fire (38:22; cf. 10:2). Bonfires of Gog's weapons burn for seven years of celebration; but the Jewish people also spend seven months burying the dead of his armies. Certainly, the Jews do not mourn their enemy, but the use of the number seven in conjunction with burial does bear an association with the *shiva* period.⁸¹ It could very well be that, as the case against the nations is made, beginning shortly after the prohibition against partaking in mourning rituals is enacted at Ezek 24, the final conquering of the nation's vulnerability, weakness, and shame in the fantasized future creates the opportunity to reprise those rituals, albeit in a disguised and displaced fashion. In the form of an ideal, imaginary enemy capable of accommodating all projection, and gloriously defeated by his God, Ezekiel is able to lay his fears that the nation would vanish or be vulnerable forevermore to rest, and through his vision, do the same for his community. As God says, Israel will be a nation recovered from war, and he will never again hide his face from them.

The New City

Ezekiel's view of the future represented by the detailed apparition of the New Temple and City structure in Ezek 40–48 demonstrates the shape of the society for which the prophet's earlier use of the past and of idealized elements has molded the basic contours.⁸² J.Z. Smith calls the vision

an endeavor in mapping the social configurations of an ideal cultic place.... The 'structure' (correlated with 'temple' in Ezekiel 40:5) is not any extant building. It is an ideal construction, unconstrained by the pragmatics of architecture or the accidentalities of history.⁸³

literary representation at the time of its composition was not derived from its mystery but from its concrete reality (Galambush, "Necessary Enemies: Nebuchadnezzar, YHWH, and Gog in Ezekiel 38–39," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past* [ed. Brad Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore; New York and London: T&T Clark, 2006]), 259–62. In any case, 'Gog' of Ezek 38–39 is certainly a fantasy creation, playing out a crucial role in the prophetic psychodrama.

⁸¹ Cf. Lamm, *Jewish Way*, 86–87, on the biblical and Rabbinic connections between the seven day mourning period and seven day holiday celebrations.

⁸² Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 40–41; 139–42; Davis, *Scroll*, 118–26.

⁸³ J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 48–49.

The use of the prophetic mode as transitional space to work out a new reality apart from the demands of everyday life continues vibrantly. The question of the real-world value of this Temple remains open. Some take these descriptions to constitute a functional blueprint for the post-Exilic place of worship. The fact that this particular plan was never implemented in the Second Temple period leads some to assume it therefore failed to gain enough adherents and therefore represents only the good intentions of a small, ineffective minority.⁸⁴ Another option is to view Ezek 40–48 as nothing more than a literary symbol—a majestic one, to be sure, but not ever meant to be constructed.

But Stevenson is surely correct when she places the Vision of the New City in an exilic social context that emphasizes a radical social change corresponding to a radical change in sacred geography. The text conflates the mediating function of the Temple (between Heaven and Earth, sacred and profane) with that of the literary symbol (between future and past, hope and reality) to effect real change in the Jewish understanding of what being God's chosen people will mean—namely, YHWH, and to a certain extent the priesthood, will supplant the monarchy. As it happens, this situation comes to pass after the return even without the erection of Ezekiel's envisioned temple-city.⁸⁵ In this manner, too, we see the effective operation in the vision of Winnicott's transitional space, especially in a textual form, as it structures desires in fantasy and gives them the concrete force to have an impact on the external world. Ezekiel's actions as prophet in Exile, guided as they are by the extreme reality of the experience of YHWH in visions, oral predictions, and lamentations, let him structure a new worldview and relationship to his past, then present it for all to receive.

Yet in juxtaposition to the preceding visionary fantasies—of the Temple in Ezek 8–10, of restoration in chs. 37–39—this vision does not bear the hallmarks of anxiety irrupting in symbolic forms into consciousness, but is a carefully created picture of new hopes and

⁸⁴ For example, Greenberg holds such a view, as articulated in "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," in *Interpreting the Prophets* (ed. J.L. Mays and P.J. Achtemeier; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 215–36. Others who feel that Ezekiel's followers expected his or their plan to become a reality in the post-Exilic world include Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 284–86; and Hanson, *Dawn*, 228–34.

⁸⁵ Stevenson, *Transformation*, 151–53.

expectations based on a reconstituted understanding of reality.⁸⁶ Deguid suggests,

Ezekiel's plan is not strictly utopian. His promised land is not located 'nowhere' or even 'somewhere' but in the land of Israel, which Yahweh swore to the patriarchs. The past history of Israel has not been ignored or abolished but rather reformed.⁸⁷

There is very little ambiguous or secretive about the restored Temple. The long, descriptive passages of its measurements, chambers, and archways stand as the very opposite of the depictions of the Temple in ch. 8 (even to the point of banality).⁸⁸ The cultic practices, of course, are clearly described and are of obvious Israelite origin. Of the command for Ezekiel to describe this vision to the Exiles at 43:10–12, Davis states,

Like the conclusions to the narrative histories in chs. 16 and 20, this passage affirms the connection between new vision and memory, between restoration and repentance.⁸⁹

This envisioned Temple is literally a 'new structure of appreciation' in Homans' phraseology; I believe it is no accident that the details of its construction are so concrete. Mirroring these details, the complex interlocking social relations comprise what J.Z. Smith terms 'a total system.'⁹⁰

Of course, alterations and obfuscations remain, at least on the surface. While the vision obviously "completes the cycle of the city's defilement, destruction, and restoration," the new city is never identified as

⁸⁶ While affirming the genuineness of the vision to the degree that such a determination can be made, Zimmerli does underscore the overt stylization of its content. Though it recalls the stylization of Ezek's previous oracles, and obviously recalls the Temple Vision specifically, the disorder reflected in that vision is conspicuously absent here (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2:245). Furthermore, the revelation presented in chs. 40–48 is basically static, rather than filled with movement and narrative, as in Ezek 8 (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2:327). The lack of such qualities indicates that unrestrained fantasy activity, in the end, plays a much diminished role in its creation.

⁸⁷ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 140; cf. Renz, "Zion Tradition," 92, 99. In regard to the restorative vision of a new reality, Renz observes that "the Zion tradition is more prominent in these chapters than in any of the preceding ones" (Renz, "Zion Tradition," 92).

⁸⁸ On this point, and scholars' and other readers' resistance to the details' immediate importance for the vision's message (not to mention genre), see Stevenson, *Transformation*, 4–7.

⁸⁹ Davis, *Scroll*, 122.

⁹⁰ Smith, *To Take Place*, 70; see also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 2:344.

or with the old Jerusalem. “The God who left in rage returns in triumph. Only Jerusalem, the chastened and forgiven wife, is absent from the scene.”⁹¹ Julie Galambush demonstrates that beyond missing its nominal identity, for purity reasons it lacks also the gendered identity as woman/wife illustrated and exploited throughout the book, especially in Ezek 16 and 24. The healing dynamics underlying Ezekiel’s obsession with purity are exposed in the ease with which cultic purity slides into the metaphor of feminine menstrual, moral, and nuptial purity.⁹² Ultimately the new sacral city cannot become impure in the way it had in the past, for it is never again depicted as a woman. Its new representation indicates that perfect purity will be the essence of the new society and that perfect healing as been completed.⁹³ As in the New Heart passage—which, not incidentally, is preceded some verses back by the statement, “Mortal, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; like the uncleanness of menstruation was their behavior before me” (36:17)—the denizens of the city will become incapable of further disobedience.⁹⁴

Similarly, the official role of the Elders and the other lay leaders in Temple practice is rendered virtually non-existent.⁹⁵ In underscoring the significance of the Temple structures in Ezek 40–44, the laity has literally been moved from the center (8:16) to the margins (42:14).⁹⁶ Whereas the earlier vision aimed to recall the Elders negatively, this one pointedly forgets them. The positive side of this reconstructed social reality involves, to a great extent, the relationship between the

⁹¹ Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* (SBLDS 130; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 147.

⁹² See, for example, Galambush’s argument (*Jerusalem*, 136–40) for the significance of the literal meaning of the noun *h/l’h* as ‘disease’ in the metaphor for Jerusalem involving blood and a ‘pot’ (uterus).

⁹³ Stevenson also expresses the vision’s impact in terms of “a healed world” (*Transformation*, 159) and “the hope of a future as a healed and transformed community” (*Transformation*, 165).

⁹⁴ Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 130. The inherently feminine elements of cities, both in the traditions of ancient Near Eastern culture and in a psychological sense, are recovered in symbolic, essentially unconscious ways, in what she calls ‘the return of the repressed.’ In this way the feminine aspects of the city, long articulated in mythology and prophecy as a god’s consort or bride, are recovered, but their danger is transmuted; they resolve into latent elements of the city’s identity, into the ‘eternal feminine’ (Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 148–56). On the history of the representation of the ancient Near Eastern city as wife/consort of the god and its use in Judaic Prophecy, see Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 20–58.

⁹⁵ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 127–32.

⁹⁶ Cf. Smith’s mapping in *To Take Place*, 56–58.

reconstituted priesthood and royalty, on the one hand, and the Zadokites and the Levites, on the other; it is mostly an effort to clarify 'turf' under the guise of avoiding the previous generations' abominations.⁹⁷ Not surprisingly, Ezekiel's recovery redeems the Zadokite priesthood's inalienable rights in the Temple, over and against the contributions of any other group; they are second only to YHWH in power and jurisdiction.

Strangely, though, "all this privilege is described as a reward for their faithfulness in a time of error" (Ezek 44:15; 48:11).⁹⁸ Ezekiel 22:26 lists the failures of the priests in enforcing purity laws, so that YHWH is "profaned among them." The promotion of the priesthood and their reconciliation with God for their past—some might say *obfuscation* of their past—illustrates the continuing role of the play of realities in fantasy as essential to a restorative, healing vision of the future community. What is important to Ezekiel is that the internal logic of his own recovery as projected into the future and his sense of Israel's restoration correlate in a single vision. Davis indicates that Ezek 40–48 "speaks in the most concrete terms of YHWH's intention for Israel, which enables both a responsible turning to the past and a hopeful movement into the future."⁹⁹ For this reason, these chapters do not represent a mere political tract or architectural-social blueprint, but the crystallized statement of the truths ahead, for Ezekiel and for Israel, given the truths of their mutual pasts that he has, like no other, been asked to face. The corollary of the increased prominence is increased work, diligence, and responsibility to God (44:17–31).¹⁰⁰ As the perfect cure would promise, the patient will recover literally better than ever. The completed work of mourning includes the re-invention of Ezekiel's own capacity for priestly work.

But socially, the prophet also seeks, in part, to begin again at the beginning. The spate of priestly laws in these chapters returns the

⁹⁷ See Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 40–43; 80–83. As I have focused on the acts of commemoration associated with the real or envisaged devastation of the Temple itself, I have not introduced Ezek's use of the past in its portrayal of the monarchy. Deguid's book presents an excellent study of exactly this effort to achieve similar ends as I have outlined with the laity and the memory of the Temple; its judgment concerns, simply put, the royal leaders' undeniable failure to uphold God's commandments from the earliest times to the wretched events of the Babylonian conquest (*Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 33–57).

⁹⁸ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 80–81.

⁹⁹ Davis, *Scroll*, 122.

¹⁰⁰ Deguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 81.

reader to the Law-giving at Sinai, but they are meant both to evoke and supersede the Mosaic statutes for future generations. In the same way, the partitioning of the holy land recalls Num 34:1–12 and Josh 13–21, but employs the fervent hope that the new inhabitants will not squander their inheritance as the old tribes had and once again forget their bond to the land to the point at which they themselves are forgotten in it.

This chapter has encountered repeatedly the deleterious effects of the estrangement of Exile on various spaces and locations: the sky splits open above the captives at Tel Abib; the events of the siege are reenacted on the prophet's body and in his home in the Sign Acts; the Abominations in the Temple result in imagining Jerusalem's total annihilation. Even other nations, guilty only of continued existence and prosperity, are not spared. The Vision of the New City reconciles God and his people with earthly space again; by the same token, temporally, the failures of the past no longer threaten to eradicate Israel's future. Thus it should come as little surprise that in the final visions that God presents to Ezekiel, he establishes himself firmly back in the center of the new nation, theologically as well as geographically. The New City once again affirms the presence of YHWH in his land and among his people. Thus, the Book of Ezekiel fittingly closes on the name of the restored city: יהוה שמה—"YHWH Is There."

CHAPTER THREE

4 EZRA: "BECAUSE OF MY GRIEF I HAVE SPOKEN"

The repetitive, even paradigmatic, nature of one traumatic loss could hardly find a better illustration than the post-70 C.E. apocalypses treated in the next two chapters of this study. The events of the Babylonian Conquest and Exile to which the prophet Ezekiel was party become the shared backdrop for three texts—4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and 3 Baruch—written in the aftermath of the Romans' destruction of the Temple. When the Second Temple fell to another world empire, the conditions brought about by this national tragedy were similarly mournful, but the traditions available for expressing grief and anger toward the situation were quite different from those of Ezekiel and others in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C.E. By the first century C.E., numerous philosophies and perspectives unheard of before the Exile were at least peripherally known to segments of some Jews. Forms of knowledge and literature, including wisdom and apocalypticism, supplanted prophecy as an expression of God's communication with his people. And, most clearly, there was a five hundred year old record of the fact that such a calamity had occurred previously in the people's history.

One major theological reality to develop since Ezekiel's time was a heightened level of messianic expectation, a trend incorporated into 4 Ezra, attested to in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and which came to fruition in the sectarian movement that became Christianity. Another is a degree of abstraction and essentialization of the idea of the Law, an issue important to both 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch.¹ In the decades that followed the fall of the Second Temple, certain hopes for the messianic age would surface and die out with the passage of time; other dire sentiments about the future of the Jewish people would fade and be replaced with a qualified optimism, grounded in the underlying nature

¹ See M. Desjardins, "Law in 2 *Baruch* and 4 *Ezra*," *SR* 14 (1985): 25–37; noted regarding 4 Ezra by Michael A. Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom in 4 Ezra," *JSJ* 13 (1982): 63; see also Philip F. Esler, "The Social Function of 4 *Ezra*," *JSNT* 53 (1994): 117–21; Michael P. Knowles, "Moses, the Law, and the Unity of 4 Ezra," *NT* 31 (1989): 267–74.

of the Law. Still, in any consideration of the status of the Jewish people and their future, the presence of the absent Temple would palpable. The tension between what has been lost and what must be regained gives these other Zion Apocalypses their melancholic tone. Of the protagonists of the three texts, Ezra comes across as the most ambivalent about the status of his people and hence is the most psychologically complex and interesting.

A number of treatments of 4 Ezra have already picked up on its movement from grief to consolation and the relationship to its structure, function, and meaning. E. Brandenburger and W. Harnisch emphasize the central transformative significance of Vision Four, the Vision of the Weeping Woman, that moves the seer from opposition to support, from skepticism to wisdom. Michael Stone, on the same vision, notes that mourning for Zion up to that point “has been the central motive of the book so far; that mourning finds its consolation in the present chapter.”² George Nickelsburg acknowledges the inextricable connections in these texts among the author’s grief, the need for resolution by his society, and what he calls “lamentable facts of life in the present.”³ Edith Humphrey claims that while the plot moves from lamentation to consolation, a palpable transformation occurs along the way, and the initial suffering is most likely the very means by which it occurs.⁴ John Collins recognizes the “psychological process of calming fear and building trust” in the repetitive interaction between Ezra and the angel Uriel.⁵ Finally, Daniel Merkur provides one of the most in-depth analyses of the role of mourning in these visions, but focuses on a novel aspect: extreme grief as inductive of visionary experience.⁶ Many others also note this structure. It is worth reiterating that the goal of this study is not merely to draw attention to

² E. Brandenburger, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes im Weltgeschehen* (ATANT 68; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981); W. Harnisch, “Der Prophet als Widerpart und Zeuge der Offenbarung: Erwägungen zur Interdependenz von Form und Sache im IV Buch Ezra,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (2d ed.; ed. D. Hellholm; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 478–80; Michael Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 336. For an overview of the scholastic discussion of the question of authorship and unity see Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 14–19.

³ George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 286; also noted at 287 and 293.

⁴ Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 163.

⁵ Collins, *Imagination*, 162.

⁶ Merkur, “Visionary Practices,” 128–33.

the prevalence of the theme of mourning in these texts but to highlight the underlying means by which these narratives seem to do the *work* of mourning. The scholarly acknowledgment that the consolation of loss is an integral part of the structure of 4 Ezra (as well as 2 Baruch, as we will see in the next chapter) offers some external validation to this central concept.

The Seer's Worldview in 4 Ezra

4 Ezra is generally divided into seven sections or visions. Visions One (3:1–5:20), Two (5:21–6:34), and Three (6:35–9:25) contain dialogues between Ezra and an *angelus interpretes*. Vision Four (9:26–10:59) is the account of the remarkable vision and transformation of a mourning woman into the Heavenly Temple. Visions Five (chs. 11–12) and Six (ch. 13) are two visions with standard apocalyptic imagery but including messianic ideals. Vision Seven (ch. 14) contains the story of Ezra and his companions receiving wisdom through revelation in order to reproduce the books of the canon, and then some others just for the wise.

With an apparent reference in ch. 12 to the Flavian emperors of Rome, 4 Ezra is believed to reflect the situation in Palestine around 100 C.E.⁷ Though 4 Ezra (2 Esdras 3–14 in the Apocrypha) has been preserved in a variety of languages and church canons, most importantly in the Latin Vulgate, a Hebrew original is generally assumed. The centerpiece of concern in this text is the fate of a Judea still under Roman control almost a generation after the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. The aftermath of this event played out somewhat differently than what had happened in 597–587 B.C.E.—the Romans imposed no exile of the upper classes and had ended Judea's political sovereignty over a century earlier. Still, the end of Second Temple society was a crushing blow to its members, and while some

⁷ Referring specifically to Daniel's four kingdom structure, 4 Ezra 12:11 states categorically, "The eagle that you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom that appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel." The twelve kings of the interpretation are invariably understood to be Roman emperors, and the three heads, it is generally agreed, are the Flavians. Rome as eagle was a common idiom; recall that one of the first acts of defiance Josephus records in his account of the events of the Roman War that led to the Temple's destruction is by the pupils of the two scribes who dared to destroy the eagle standard that Herod had erected on the Temple Gate (*J.W.* 1:33).

did remain in Palestine—and eventually engineered one last gasp revolt against the Romans under Bar Kokhba in 132–135 C.E.—it required a very different relationship to a land and a Temple that, for all intents and purposes, had ceased to exist for them.⁸

In Palestine near the end of the first century C.E., the question as to why God could allow such an event to happen (again!) and what it meant for his Chosen must have imposed itself on anyone with a vested interest in the earthly preservation of this people. Shannon Burkes underscores the horror of the ‘compulsion to repeat’ that surely prompted 4 Ezra’s creation:

[T]he author of 4 Ezra expresses deep anguish at the horrifying repetition of Jerusalem’s conquest. The book is not an immediate reaction, but a thoughtful reflection a few decades later by someone who explores the larger implication of the event on various interlocking levels, universal, national, and individual. Clearly something must be very wrong with the human race for history to keep repeating itself in this fashion.⁹

One of the fascinating aspects of 4 Ezra is that in its dialogical sections the seer grapples with these issues in juxtaposition with a traditional Yahwistic stance held by a heavenly interlocutor, usually the angel Uriel but sometimes God himself. Neither side really attains the upper hand, creating a unique tension in the narrative that is only later resolved non-verbally in one of the great visions of apocalyptic literature.

Many have wondered, however, for which side does the author speak? What position does he endorse? Some take the answers espoused by the angel to stand in for a traditionalist author’s views; others place his skepticism in Ezra’s mouth.¹⁰ But given the weight accorded in the text

⁸ For views of the function of the Second Temple in day-to-day society and the impact of its loss, see G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927–30), 1:497–506; and S. Safrai, “The Temple,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (2 vols; Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum; ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 2:865–907.

⁹ Shannon Burkes, *God, Self, and Death: The Shape of Religious Transformation in the Second Temple Period* (SJSJ 79; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 224.

¹⁰ W. Harnisch depicts Ezra and Uriel as mouthpieces of party polemics in *Verhängnis und Verheissung der Geschichte: Untersuchungen zum Zeit- und Geschichtsverständnis im 4. Buch Esra und in der syr. Baruchapokalypse* (FRLANT 97; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 64). Several other authors fall into this camp, including E. Brandenburger and Bruce Longenecker; see Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 61–64 (although she errantly includes John Collins, who seems to follow Gunkel, in

to both sides, and their unusual resolution by way of a transformative vision, 4 Ezra as a whole resists being reduced to an apologia for one side or the other. Hermann Gunkel proposes that Ezra and the angel correspond to the inner life of the author, and hence both are quint-essentially involved in the statement the text ultimately makes.¹¹ His inner conflict is allowed to remain just that, at least up until the point at which Ezra's complaints are dispelled by a radical transformation of the problem.

Some, like Michael Knowles, have objected to Gunkel's solution here as "splitting the author's personality."¹² Certainly, if the dialogue is merely a literary device that allows two important and creditable realms of inquiry to play out for the author and his audience, then there is no reason for such a strong label. But as the psychoanalytic approach to these texts has suggested, and as, I think, the emotional vicissitudes evidenced in Ezekiel have borne out, a type of psychological splitting does lie at their core. They remain focused on lamentation, and yet rage and destructive fantasies appear at significant places in the text. In 4 Ezra's dialogues the reader likely encounters not the split personality of an author but a certain reasonable yet, psychologically speaking, still protective and defensive compartmentalization of two competing views of reality: a traditional one and one based on the experiences of a lifetime that includes the seemingly unending rule of a wicked empire.¹³

this viewpoint). The view that Ezra is the author's alter-ego is identified with R.H. Pfeiffer (*History*, 85), who saw the figure's visionary experiences as evasive flights from reality. A more thoughtful argument for this position—and a devastating dismantling of that of Harnisch—can be found in A.P. Hayman, "The Problem of Pseudonymity in the Ezra Apocalypse," *JSJ* 6 (1975): 47–56.

¹¹ Hermann Gunkel, "Review of Kabisch," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 16 (1891): 5–11; and "Das vierte Buch Esra," in *Die Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* (vol. 2 of *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, ed. E. Kautzsch; Tübingen: Mohr, 1900), 331–402.

¹² Knowles, "Moses," 259; see also W. Mundel, "Das religiöse Problem des IV. Esrabuches," *ZAW* 47 (1929): 222–49.

¹³ To describe these views as compartmentalized, however, is not to assert that they are completely incompatible as voiced or that they have no *a priori* relationship to each other. They do, however, assert their own logic and priorities, and each could represent a complete worldview independent of the other; yet neither is perfectly articulated or theologically grounded. Indeed, as A.P. Hayman argues, both have inner inconsistencies that cannot be explained away by dogmatism, and the seer and the interpreter in fact occasionally seem to adopt aspects of the other's position, for instance at 4:27–30 for the angel (noted also by Jacob M. Myers, *I and II Esdras* [The Anchor Bible Commentary; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974], 277) and 7:17 for

The tension generated by the two coexistent views of reality is palpable; the dialogues serve to express each side's agenda.¹⁴ Significantly, the debate between them ends in virtual standstill. By the end Ezra does not defend his position or question the angel's so vigorously, but he also never admits any error in his logic or in the nature of his complaint. The fact is that through the three sections of the dialogues 4 Ezra perfectly represents unresolved cognitive dissonance that gives way not to rational acceptance of the opposing position, but rather to complete emotional reinvestment in a more traditional, more accepting worldview. That is, the ambivalence this situation has created over an extended period of time begins to break this compartmentalization down. Hence, in the transitional space of fantasy represented by the dialogues and the visions, the figure of Ezra is sometimes painfully of two minds about the Jews' lot in this world, including his own. The two sides are necessary to the effect of the narrative as a whole, as they create and then allay in the text the same anxieties felt by Palestinian Jews within a generation of the fall of the Second Temple.¹⁵

In a related manner, Visions One through Four serve to demonstrate another of the underlying assertions of this study, as articulated for 4 Ezra by Humphrey, that "identity is one of the themes proper to the apocalyptic genre, since it is a revelatory theme corresponding to the question 'Who?'"¹⁶ Such emotional forces, as much as they require the transformation of one's outer perception, can demand as much internally. In certain apocalypses, including this one, revelation manifests itself in the text by setting up the central emotional transformation of an individual, often in parallel with the symbolic transfor-

Ezra (Hayman, "Pseudonymity," 51–52). These incongruities not only make possible the very tension that drives the movement of the text, they also foreshadow its resolution and the transformation of identity enacted in Vision Four.

¹⁴ This tension in itself remains an important focus in analyses of 4 Ezra. For instance, it is central to the interpretation by Alden Lloyd Thompson, who traces the vicissitudes of the two sides on the issues of blame and salvation through this tension (A.L. Thompson, *Responsibility for Evil in the Theodicy of IV Ezra* (SBLDS 29; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1977), 124); see also Desjardins, "Law," 25–37; noted by Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 65–66. Walter Harrelson terms the exchange "a running meditation on the part of the author with the theological traditions of his own community," though in so doing he rejects the type of psychological interpretation done by Gunkel (Harrelson, "Ezra among the Wicked in 2 Esdras 3–10," in *The Divine Helmsman: Studies on God's Control of Human Events* [ed. James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel; New York: KTAV], 31).

¹⁵ Esler, "Social Function," 108–14.

¹⁶ Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 156.

mation of a woman into a building, or another kind of identification between the two.¹⁷ That the transformation in 4 Ezra occurs not by some cognitive epiphany but rather in the course of a wrenchingly sad narrative, punctuated by a glorious vision, affirms what the incomplete disposition of the dialogues suggests. There is no compelling argument to justify the gap between traditional expectations and the world as it is. The author of the apocalypse recognizes, if unconsciously, a change in perspective toward the cosmos is necessary for survival; thus the seer lives it out for his community.

Scholars have been divided on how, exactly, to characterize the relationship between the author the text and the 'life' of its seer. Collins suggests,

[I]t is probable that the story of Ezra represents the author's own spiritual journey. As a literary work the book stands as a guide to the perplexed. By identifying with Ezra, the reader can acknowledge the dilemmas of history, but come to experience the 'apocalyptic cure' by turning his attention to the transcendent perspective provided by the angel and the dream visions.¹⁸

On the other hand, like Ezekiel 1:1, 3, a textual peculiarity from the outset makes the reader take note of some possible identity confusion. 3:1 states, "In the thirtieth year after the destruction of our city, *I Salathiel, who am also called Ezra*, was in Babylon" (emphasis mine). The possibility of a separate source, a 'Salathiel Apocalypse,' was in vogue around the end of the nineteenth century, promoted especially by the work of Richard Kabisch and G.H. Box, but little has emerged in subsequent source-critical analysis to support a distinct work by that name.¹⁹ In the Bible Salathiel is the father of Zerubbabel, the Judean prince who helped organize the building of the Second Temple, and for whom there seems to have been some messianic expectations (cf. Zech 4:6–10) before he inexplicably disappears from the literature. But as 4 Ezra makes no reference to Salathiel or Zerubbabel after the first verse, why this name appears here and why it is explicitly identified with Ezra remains a mystery. Stone compares the formula with Dan 1:7 or even Saul/Paul of Acts 13:9 but also suggests an etymological

¹⁷ Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 19. Cf. Ezek 24:16–24; Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 20–58, 148–56.

¹⁸ Collins, *Imagination*, 168–69.

¹⁹ Cf. Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 119–20; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 12–13.

solution: if the name is understood as *š'lti 'l*, it reads as "I asked God," "a singularly appropriate cognomen for the Ezra who is such an insistent questioner."²⁰ But given Ezra's role in restoring the Torah at the end of 4 Ezra, he clearly adopts the roles of both a second Ezra and second Moses.²¹

Indeed, it is worth noting that in addition to pseudepigraphy's other qualities, it represents another form of the doubling of identities and the reappearance of the past in apocalypse. Furthermore, it is curious that this text, so concerned with identity, transformation, and the interplay of revelation and concealment, begins with a name that is lost, never to return, while the subsequent identification, "Ezra," enters into an incredible realm of divine fantasy. We could also speculate that Salathiel is the name of the author, who is making his identification with the visionary perfectly evident. Of course, such a declaration would undermine much of the function of pseudepigraphy.

In the end, it is likely safe to assume that the Ezra account, stylized and idealized as it is, does not present merely a ghost-written version of an author's personal transformation, even if there may be real-life elements present in it. In fact the role of the community in 4 Ezra reveals a good deal about the way in which the author relies on his community to reproduce and complete his own transformation.

The Social Context of 4 Ezra

Unfortunately, the evidence for the social matrix of this period of Jewish history remains terribly muddled. Stone dismisses past ventures into clarifying the confusion, but in the end he simply throws up his hands, saying only that 4 Ezra had something to do with the intellectual matters that would eventually define early Rabbinic Judaism and nothing to do with those at the Qumran collective.²²

Philip Esler, as noted above, applies the strategies of the reduction of cognitive dissonance to the situation evidenced by 4 Ezra and relates the work directly to this function in the larger community.²³ He sees the audience addressed here as all of Israel (although the social divisions made in 4 Ezra 14, which I will examine shortly, makes this assess-

²⁰ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 55–56.

²¹ Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 192 n. 70.

²² Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 40–41.

²³ Esler, "Social Function," 114.

ment highly optimistic, or at least abstract).²⁴ Thus Esler believes that the entire community addressed by this text would be taken through the same experience as the visionary protagonist: "Ezra's journey from grief to hope was, vicariously, Israel's."²⁵

Earl Breech, however, states that the

form of the work is constituted by the narrative of Ezra's (*not* the author's) movement from distress to consolation, from distress occasioned by the destruction of Jerusalem to consolation by the Most High himself who reveals to the prophet, in dream visions, his end-time plans.... If one focuses on the motif of consolation...one notices that the work moves from Ezra's distress, through his efforts to console a bereaved mother, to his own consolation and subsequent speech of comfort to his community.²⁶

The distinction Breech makes between Ezra and his author is instructive, but somewhat misleading. Breech asserts, "[T]he author insists that merely private grief should be subordinated to community sorrow. From his perspective, grief itself is the basis for community."²⁷ Breech therefore closely ties Ezra's identity to his community's in that his grief is overtly shaped by the collective experience of loss, creating both a community of memory and, later, a textual community with the other scribal revelators. Stone rightly faults Breech for tying the Ezra figure so readily to the community of the text—14:27–36 hardly qualifies as the 'speech of comfort' that Breech terms it.²⁸ But overall Breech is adept at illustrating the various levels at which this text must be considered to understand fully just how it moves from consolation to grief—and whom it is moving.

Scribes and Society in 4 Ezra

On this note, one salient worldview for discerning a social location for the text concerns 4 Ezra's scribalism and interest in wisdom. It is fair to say that this text exemplifies that apocalyptic concern better than most. Of course, the Biblical Ezra was a priest and scribe who reinstated Yahwistic religious practice in Judea after the Exile, in part

²⁴ Esler, "Social Function," 119.

²⁵ Esler, "Social Function," 121.

²⁶ Earl Breech, "These Fragments I Have Shored Against My Ruins: The Form and Function of 4 Ezra," *JBL* 92 (1973): 269–70.

²⁷ Breech, "Fragments," 272.

²⁸ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 19; Breech, "Fragments," 274.

by promulgating a liturgy from the Law of Moses (Neh 8:1–9).²⁹ But the connection between scribes and the hidden knowledge of heaven and earth not immediately revealed in the Torah takes center stage in Ezra's worldview. Moreover, in 4 Ezra, scribalism and secret knowledge play a key role in the way the seer prepares his community for the future (12:37–38; 14:23–26).³⁰ It suggests a general attitude about scribes in connection with the preservation of the sacred books for the future which regards them as natural and appropriate recipients of divine revelation.

4 Ezra portrays a scribe compelled to couple his access to heavenly wisdom with a particular leadership role in such dark times.³¹ The first time the text shows Ezra interacting with his society is between the Fifth and Sixth Visions (12:40–51). After he has not returned for seven days, the people gather in the field where Ezra had his vision and ask,

“How have we offended you, and what harm have we done you, that you have forsaken us and sit in this place? For of all the prophets you alone are left to us. . . . Therefore if you forsake us, how much better would have been for us if we also had been consumed in the burning of Zion. For we are no better than those who died there.” And they wept with a loud voice. (4 Ezra 12:41–42, 44–45)

This passage makes clear that Ezra's society continues in a mournful state; in fact, the text specifically states that all the people, “from the least to the greatest,” gather to express their distress (12:40). Their statements mimic the death wishes uttered by the seer himself earlier in the text (cf. 4:12; 5:35; see below). Now is his moment to draw them into his most powerful sphere of influence, allowing them to recover a viable worldview that they themselves participate in making real and effective. Yet he does not share his revelations with them. Instead, he offers words of encouragement and tells them not to “be

²⁹ Understanding this text's relationship to its pseudepigraphic title in this manner is especially important in contrast to Brandenburger and Harnisch, who argued that Ezra voices an heretical viewpoint that is refuted by the interpreting angel. Hayman thoroughly rebuts such a notion, first and foremost by questioning why supposed heresies would be placed in the mouth of “the venerable Ezra, the great scribe, restorer of the Law, and founder of the Great Synagogue” (Hayman, “Pseudonymity,” 50–51).

³⁰ Cf. Breech, “Fragments,” 272–74; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 378; but note the cautious assent by Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 80.

³¹ So too does Baruch in 2 Bar., but not in 3 Bar., instead opting for a solo tour of heaven.

sorrowful...for the Most High has you in remembrance, and the Mighty One has not forgotten you in your struggle" (12:46–47).

Some scholars go so far as to read the rest of the text through the lens of the last chapter, ch. 14.³² Ezra and his scribal community recover the Law that was lost in the destruction of Judah, at the behest of Ezra that warning and instruction be left for future generations, but also scripture which is to remain the possession of the wise (14:6–26). Apparently versed in the tradition of the dual revelation at Sinai adopted by Rabbinic Judaism—that is, some matters were given to the whole community, others transmitted by privileged individuals in secret—the scribes leave the community for forty days. No word of protest or woe is recorded this time, however.³³ Ezra drinks from a mysterious cup that fills him with understanding and wisdom, and his "spirit retained its memory" (4 *Ezra* 14:40). In him and his companions was "the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge" (14:45–47; cf. Ezek 3:1–3).

This scene speaks volumes about the relative importance of the society in Ezra's mission. In his last speech to the people (14:27–36), they remain silent; there is no dialogue, there is no plea for him to

³² Such as Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom," 62–65; and Knowles, "Moses," 260–61; over and against Breech's dismissal of the chapter as an epilogue (Breech, "Fragments," 418).

³³ On the adaptation of the hidden Mosaic tradition by 4 Ezra, see Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom," 64 n. 29; also R.J. Coggins and M.A. Knibb, *The First and Second Books of Esdras* (The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible; Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 272, 274. Of further note here is the additional parallelisms created by this association, which relates the author's situation post-70 to the biblical Ezra's situation, as a lawgiver on the verge of a new Judaism after the Exile, and, ultimately, to Moses' original act of law-giving that brought the Jewish people into being as a social entity. 4 *Ezra* 14 clearly sees the possessor of apocalyptic knowledge in the first century C.E. in the mode of these Jewish culture heroes (Knowles, "Moses," 265–68; Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom," 63). Early Rabbis would themselves produce the Mishnah on the basis of this tradition, but rather than keep it for the wise among the people—such as themselves—they transformed the Law through it to create a true real-world basis for the preservation of Judaism. In eschewing apocalyptic revelation of this sort, the Rabbis also eschewed a good deal of the elitism it could engender. (However, Rabbinic Judaism still reserved a place for elite and secret studies within a revelatory framework, most notably the Kabbalah and Merkabah literature.) G.H. Box probably most vigorously advances the argument that the purpose of 4 Ezra's redaction was to make it acceptable to orthodox Judaism (Box, introduction to "4 Ezra," in *Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 2 of *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*; ed. R.H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913], 542). Breech, however, discusses the implications of Box's position in undercutting the reader's experience of the text's unity and strength (Breech, "Form and Function," 268).

remain with them. He simply makes an odd historical/eschatological pronouncement—odd in the sense that it is out of place and far from consoling—and leaves, knowing full well he will have more secrets from the community when he returns. God has informed him prior to this gathering that he will be given understanding for forty days, but only part of this new knowledge will be made public; some of it will be delivered ‘in secret’ to the wise (14:23–26). For this reason, Michael Knibb suggests, the social setting of apocalypses in general and 4 Ezra in particular should be sought in learned circles.³⁴ The social tension inherent in scribalism and the wisdom tradition is on full display in 4 Ezra, as groups of relatively uniquely educated individuals become the carriers of cultural knowledge that could be made available to all.

Some utopias are for the few, and some are for all. 4 Ezra leads us to believe it intends for its vision to be imparted to only a select number of worthy recipients, and the secret nature of the seventy books implies to the reader that the power contained in the ‘concealed’ revelation remains available for the wise to use in the name of the Jewish community during the coming tribulations. An apocalypse like this one could shore up the position of a scribal writer who takes a stance on the events of the past and a direction for the future, lobbying for more authority and presence in the community than he had been able to achieve through whatever ordinary political means existed at the time.

Loss in the Present

Even more than the Book of Ezekiel, 4 Ezra presents mourning and lamentation in its manifest content. It begins (3:1–2) with a scene of Ezra in bed in Babylon, greatly disturbed by his thoughts concerning the ‘desolation of Zion’ some thirty years earlier.³⁵ (See Figure 4.) A dream frame is implied by this setting and confirmed by the seer awaking at the end of the vision (5:14)—but it is (as at 2 *En.* 1:4–8) immediately subverted by the physical appearance of the self-same angel from the dream, who sets him on his feet after he faints. Of course, fainting

³⁴ Knibb, “Apocalyptic and Wisdom,” 65; Michael Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (ed. M.E. Stone; Assen: Van Gorcum and Fortress, 1984), 431–22; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 40–41.

³⁵ Cf. Dan 2:29; 7:1, 15; also, the date may allude to Ezek 1:1.

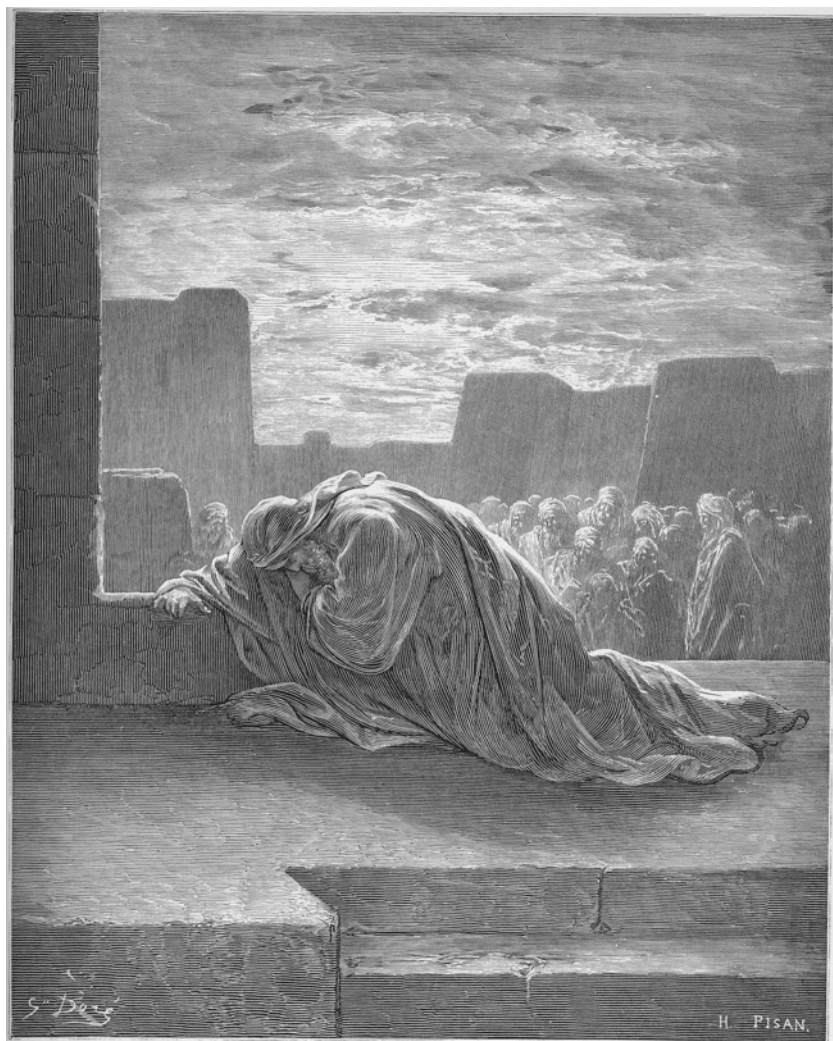


Figure 4: "Ezra in Prayer." From the *Doré Illustrated Bible*, Gustave Doré, 1866.

could continue the dream state, thus reintroducing the presence of the divine being. In short, the first vision establishes just how fluid visionary, dream, and shared realities are in this text, and proceeds to exploit the dissolution of these boundaries in the creative space it establishes to keep open the work of fantasy, in the structure of the narrative and in the empathetic investment of an audience. Merkur suggests that this first vision, in fact, depicts a combination of features from both dream and daydream-type experiences, one which permits “limited conscious control of unconsciously originating materials.”³⁶

The first half of the book thereafter is structured by episodes of ritual mourning (usually seven days long) followed by laments, then questions and dialogue with the *angelus interpretes* (5:20–9:37).³⁷ But by delineating Ezra’s emotions throughout the dialogues, it becomes apparent that much is going on in this text beneath the surface. The issues of rage and despair, however, in the course of the purposeful if somewhat emotionally distant narrative interaction with the divine authority do ultimately culminate in a radical transformation, in which all that was obscured becomes clear.

The Dialogues

Ezra’s plaintive dialogues with the angel Uriel unmistakably establish the visionary as the voice of experience, as one who has lived through something that demands explanation. Of the key issues he raises consistently, one is national and one is personal, but they are both related: he laments the suffering of the Jewish people in light of the prosperity of her enemies but also his failure to understand this situation.³⁸ Both involve a question of basic fairness in the structure of the world—the cosmos should be consistent and understandable, especially for God’s people—and hence, psychologically, demonstrate the real-life failure of expectations grounded in basic trust.

We should here recall that one of the defining characteristics of a melancholic response to loss is cognitive dissonance. That is, there exists a disparity in the mind between the way reality is and the way

³⁶ Merkur, “Visionary Practices,” 131; see also the comments by Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 185.

³⁷ Cf. Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 69–70.

³⁸ These complaints form the essential basis for Thompson’s analysis in *Responsibility*; see especially 125–34.

it should be. Ezra's skepticism in his dialogues certainly reflects this disjunction. The wide gap between the author's experience and his traditional expectations emerges in the oft-noted irony that Ezra is more reasonable, more reality-oriented than his divine interlocutor.³⁹ The angel's answers remain totally insufficient, yet Ezra is still compelled to look to him for understanding. Notably, the need to return again and again to a failed expectation in hopes of mastering the reality of the loss also exemplifies melancholia.

The character of Ezra, still aggrieved after three decades, appears to convey just such a fruitless struggle through the first three visions. However, the seer appears remarkably self-aware, as his emotions are conscious and manifest; he places blame for the destruction of the city on the destroyer, yet he definitely implicates God in his negligence in acting to protect his people.

Are the deeds of those who inhabit Babylon any better? Is that why she has gained dominion over Zion?...And my heart failed me, for I have seen how you endure those who sin, and have spared those who act wickedly, and have destroyed your people, and have preserved your enemies.

Then Ezra continues with the accusation: [And you] "have not shown to anyone how your way may be comprehended" (3:28–31).⁴⁰ Similar complaints also appear at 4 *Ezra* 4:2–3, 12, and 22–25. In these last verses, Ezra makes clear that he seeks merely the ability to understand his own reality, not the heavenly reality to which Uriel's loaded questions, starkly reminiscent of God's to Job, are directed.⁴¹

³⁹ Thompson terms the divine response in the first three visions 'inadequate'; it is either evasive or simply reflective of the problem Judaism at large has in addressing the issues Ezra raises (*Responsibility*, 143–46). Hayman relates Ezra's failure to pronounce himself satisfied by the angel's answers to the author's and others' experiences in the latter half of the first century (Hayman, "Pseudonymity," 55). Knowles calls the fact that the angel answers almost none of Ezra's questions "remarkable": "They simply flare up into a final bitter exchange...and then are left hanging somewhere between heaven and earth." Yet, he adds, "somehow Ezra is comforted" (Knowles, "Moses," 259).

⁴⁰ Syriac. Vulgate reads "be abandoned"; see Myers, *I and II Esdras*, 161.

⁴¹ Ezra's tone in the dialogues is rare, if not unprecedented, in ancient Jewish literature. The most obvious parallel for Ezra's blunt disregard for the divine argument, as mentioned, is Job, but Job struggles mightily *not* to blame God for his misfortune. Ezra seems to have no such compunction, especially in the initial complaint in ch. 3. (Thompson does show that by ch. 9, blame has shifted to humanity; *Responsibility*, 125.) Below we will find that Ezra's self-pity has given way to annihilating fantasies

If this debate reflects certain unconscious dynamics, psychological functions of the two figures for the author and his audience need to be delineated. Unlike Ezekiel, who avoided placing blame on any dangerous targets—i.e., Babylon and God—4 Ezra asserts their culpability from the start. The inner conflict results not from denying the state of affairs of this reality, but from the frustrating inability to understand it, to reconcile it with past expectations—in other words, to mourn the original failure and then move on. As Burkes observes, “Ezra’s distress over God’s failure to mend the human heart pushes the blame ultimately towards the deity.”⁴² Tellingly, the angel asserts at 7:61 that God himself *does not* mourn for the many damned in the world, suggesting that at some level neither does the author. As in Ezekiel, this psychological paralysis is projected onto YHWH. A melancholic element is definitely present, though the firm real-world questioning shows that the author’s psyche is not completely paralyzed by the current situation. The movement towards mourning and consolation is imminent; the dialogues are the mechanism for this movement. In fact, between the first and second visions, after Ezra has fasted and mourned, he laments that the “thoughts of his heart were very grievous” to him again, yet suddenly his “soul recovered the spirit of understanding” (*resumpsit anima mea spiritum intellectus*), and he begins his questioning of God once more (5:20–22).

This incremental process demonstrably works for Ezra. Merkur notes the cognitive level of recovery suggested by the phrase ‘the spirit of understanding’ at 4 Ezra 5:22, as opposed to the affective aspect generally associated with the heart. The two parts of human experience are constantly at odds with one another in the apocalypses examined in this study, and the regaining of the ‘spirit of understanding’ can be read as the alleviation of cognitive dissonance. However, following D.S. Russell, he calls spirit “the aspect of human nature that was most readily influenced by God.”⁴³ The interesting juxtaposition of three elements—soul, spirit, and understanding—in the context of ‘recovery’ succinctly ties the disruption of the human/divine relationship to the psychological matter of awareness and understanding. As in other types of recovery, and so too here in 4 Ezra, many aspects of one’s

that are, I think, unrivaled anywhere in the literature; furthermore, he goes so far as to state his opinion that God *hates* his people.

⁴² Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 194 n. 75.

⁴³ Merkur, “Visionary Practices,” 128.

being work separately but in an organic solidarity towards a goal of completion. Merkur relates the seer's emotional states and visionary experiences to E. Kris' concept of 'regression in service of the ego.' In this state Ezra appears more submissive and passive in his interrogation of the angel.⁴⁴

In a complementary fashion, Collins attributes the successful psychological effect of the dialogue format in calming fear and building trust to the ability of its repetitive nature to subvert the (less effective) rational argument.⁴⁵ Knibb observes that, in fact, at each of the three sections of the dialogues Ezra's emotional intensity drops and he asks purely informational questions, which might affirm Merkur's interpretation.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the fact that Ezra is less emotionally engaged and the dialogue continues in a more rational, informative manner may demonstrate that in the course of each of the dialogues, psychic structure is being built.

Uriel's loyally orthodox viewpoint is one that typically goes unchallenged in scripture. Ezra, however, tackles it head on, remains unsatisfied with the angel's responses, restates his problem, and only grudgingly gives a little ground (7:9–10). At one level, then, Uriel voices the traditionalist side of an argument that most certainly had been debated publicly and privately since 70 C.E., one that would have played out in the minds of Jews invested in the preservation of the memories of the Temple and Jerusalem in the years after their fall. Ezra's stance characterizes the inadequacies of that traditional position some thirty years later, yet expresses a need not to abandon it altogether. In the dialogues, the tension mounts between the demand that God's control in history be preserved and the reasonable evidence that his control has been compromised.

Ezra's Wish for Self-Annihilation

Even in terms of the emotional tenor of the interaction, the apparent disconnect between Ezra's issues and the divine responses serves a purpose. As an interpreter in the analytic sense, Uriel is essentially

⁴⁴ Merkur, "Visionary Practices," 129–33. Merkur's conclusions do apply keenly to Vision Four, treated below, where Ezra seems to overcome his own melancholia only to fall back into it momentarily as a phenomenal visual symbol reveals itself to him.

⁴⁵ Collins, *Imagination*, 162.

⁴⁶ Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom," 66.

unempathic. His answers are programmatic and often beside the point; he talks past Ezra or over his head. Knowles not only notes the two figures' inability to communicate, but cites *4 Ezra* 7:20–22a, 24–25, and 46–48a as examples of the divine respondent's impatience and rigidity that drive Ezra "virtually to despair."⁴⁷ Delving more deeply, Alden Thompson's study spotlights the way in which it is both the issue of the angel's indifference to the many who will be damned and that of Ezra's concern for them that drive the emotional course of the dialogues (e.g., 7:60–61). Thompson also associates this divine attitude with determinism, which I have related to the paralysis of the melancholic disposition in its view of time.⁴⁸ Indifference or the inability to feel—especially, feel love—is symptomatic as well, though it tends to mask the pain behind the feeling of loss.

In an example of psychological splitting in *4 Ezra*, the pain is felt all too much by one figure and masked by another. However, divinity does allow the angelic figure to play the role of dispassionate authority, a blank screen in the therapeutic sense, upon which the unabashed disappointment in the world is projected—just as an analyst unconsciously transfers unresolved emotional conflict, rage, and resentment onto an analyst. Ezra's frustration with his discussion derives from his inability to connect with his interlocutor on a cognitive level; yet issues raised, defended, and avoided stir his emotional life in unexpected ways. The rage of the past thirty years becomes focused first on Ezra himself, then on God and his representative in sometimes morbid ways. Early on, the melancholic substitution of lost objects becomes expressed in wishes for punishment, even self-annihilation.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Knowles, "Moses," 257, 269.

⁴⁸ For example, Thompson, *Responsibility*, 137–38.

⁴⁹ Thompson (*Responsibility*, 127–32) believes these proclaimed death wishes are also related to passages in which Ezra includes himself among the perishing and disavows himself of any moral worth (e.g., *4 Ezra* 7:75–76; 8:42–45). Thompson's work in this area is critiqued and expanded upon by Harrelson, "Ezra among the Wicked," 21–39. Knowles, too, observes that this self-perception changes in the second half of the book, but attributes it to a lack of understanding or wisdom overall (Knowles, "Moses," 272–73). Significantly, he also calls the change of attitude effected by the Vision of the Weeping Woman "psychologically implausible" (Knowles, "Moses," 267). Ironically for Knowles, as this study and others contend, it is precisely this shift in self-perception through the visionary experience that provides the clearest data for a dynamic psychological interpretation. Merkur ("Visionary Practices," 134) correlates these kinds of radical shifts in temperament exhibited by many apocalypticists, including Ezra, to bipolar value judgments by the superego, an assessment entirely consistent with the theoretical constructs of this study.

At 4 *Ezra* 4:12, Ezra declares, "It would be better for us not to be here than to come here and live in ungodliness, and to suffer and not understand why." A fascinating sequence, 5:30–35, concisely illustrates several aspects of the emotional tenor of Ezra's relationship to God early in the dialogues.

First, the seer makes the shocking declaration that he believes that the deity now *hates* his people; and, if this is so, he should punish them directly, not by an unrighteous proxy nation.⁵⁰ Ezra has suggested that God's love has turned to hate; worse yet, God remains indifferent enough not to punish his people himself. One who has lost love, if unable at the deepest level to give up that love, will prefer to endure hate, derision, and punishment rather than indifference and total abandonment. Punishment at the very least is still attention, and attention signifies attachment.

Uriel, while not responding to Ezra's specific pleas, does strike right to the heart of the matter, asking if the seer does—i.e., could possibly—love Israel more and be more distressed by what has transpired than the Creator. This argument affects Ezra not at the cognitive level, where on the basis of his real-world experience he would be unimpressed, but on an emotional level, where the primal roots of love and trust in God's world are not yet totally torn asunder. The seer's immediate response to Uriel is no, but he adds, tellingly, that it is

because of my grief I have spoken; for every hour I suffer agonies of heart, while I strive to understand the way of the Most High and to search out part of his judgment. (5:34)⁵¹

Ezra essentially admits that he is lashing out in anger and frustration because of his grief. When he accuses his God of hating his people,

⁵⁰ In general, when God is said to hate in the Hebrew Scriptures, his enmity is directed at sin, especially idolatry (Deut 16:22; Ps 31:5–6) or toward sinful human attributes (e.g., pride, Amos 6:8; the "six things the Lord hates" of Prov 6:16). Ben Sira does state outright, "God hates sinners" (12:6). But for one of YHWH's people to believe his God hates him is extremely rare. In fact, the only significant parallel to Ezra here is found, again, in Job, when he cries out that God "has torn me in his wrath, and hated me" (16:9a). But a blanket statement that God hates his people and is not simply punishing a wayward nation out of a sense of betrayal of love seems to me unprecedented.

⁵¹ Compare this introspection with his later communal concern in the same vein, where Ezra declares to God: "And now I will speak out... about your people for whom I lament, and about Israel, for whom I am sad, and about the seed of Jacob, for whom I am troubled" (8:15–16).

but backs away from the sentiment quickly, he reveals more about his unconscious feelings than he realizes.

Like Ezekiel, the true object of Ezra's rage is the original object of his love: God. In the course of his disappointment, love has turned to hate, but via a psychological defense he prevents the realization of that hate by displacing it onto the object itself. This displacement is, in part, related to a defense known as *reaction formation*, whereby one can continue to repress unbearable affect—often hating what one once loved—by transforming the conscious aspect of the emotion into its opposite. Thus, one avoids being confronted with one's hate, feeling instead intense and idealized love.⁵² The displacement, transformation, and self-direction of the hate all are means by which Ezra and his author cope with the unpleasant implications of the emotion, but it is the anxiety and ambivalence underlying the defenses that also produce the visions and nudge those experiencing them towards resolution. In other words, Ezra cannot say he hates God, but it is momentarily psychically acceptable to believe that God hates his people, himself included. When the angel rebuffs him again, telling Ezra that he cannot understand God's way or judgment, it redirects the melancholic rage once again onto himself. He asks the self-annihilating question, "Why did not my mother's womb become my grave...?"⁵³ Some of Ezra's nihilistic complaints reflect what might be termed today *survivor guilt*, as he seems to link his inability to understand the decimation of his people with an unworthiness of his continued existence. This almost suicidal impulse consumes his entire existence at points, where he could be paraphrased in the words of many chronically depressed individuals: "I wish I had never been born!"

The Work of Mourning

The discourses between Ezra and Uriel convey another set of psychological issues suggesting that even in the midst of this stalemate, the seeds of recovery have been planted. The first concerns the focus on time and history, including frequent returns to and uses of the past;

⁵² "Reaction Formation," in *Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis* (ed. Ludwig Eidelberg, M.D.; New York: Free Press, 1968), 366–67.

⁵³ Cf. 4 *Ezra* 7:62–63, 116–17; parallels in wording and sentiment occur in other scriptural responses to such a crisis, as at Jer 15:10 and 1 Macc 2:7.

the second, the tension between revealing and concealing, especially the secrets of the world to come; the third, a consistent use of symbols of birth and motherhood.

Time

While the first verse of 4 Ezra (3:1) establishes the author's awareness of time in the historical sense, it is important that he immediately seeks to situate the present within the religious history of his people, so as to draw sharp contrasts between this age and the past. Ezra's review begins with the Creation and Adam's rejection of God's commands, and continues, in Deuteronomic fashion, with the pattern of the Jews squandering God's mercy (3:4–27).⁵⁴ "The opening prayer of Ezra also serves to relate the present dilemma to the universal human situation. Ezra recites the outline of history, beginning with Adam," Collins observes. However,

[t]his passage is quite different from the reviews of history that are presented in other apocalypses in the guise of prophecy. It is also different from the traditional Deuteronomic recitation of salvation history. The emphasis is not on salvation but on failure.⁵⁵

This twist in the use of the past occurs when Ezra declines to allow this theodicy to remain an unchallenged narrative of explanation; in fact, he critiques it outright, saying that his experience in Exile has shown him "ungodly deeds without number" (3:29). "When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in your sight? Or what nation has kept your commandments so well?" he demands (3:35). A deconstruction of the old narrative that justified suffering transpires here, and Uriel's response does nothing to preserve it. He only relates the inquiry to Ezra's failure of understanding—which is to say, the failure of the old understanding of the world to remedy the new traumas in Ezra's mind (4 Ezra 4:2; cf. 4:11, 23).

What the angel does provide, following this dismissal of Ezra's concerns, is a long excursus on the future, namely, the end of the age (4 Ezra 4:26–5:13). The first forays into reconstructing a viable

⁵⁴ For a fuller account of theodicy in 4 Ezra, see Tom W. Willett, *Eschatology in the Theodicies of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra* (JSPSup 4; Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1989), 66–72, 124–25. On the text's use of history and other allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures, see Knibb, "Apocalyptic and Wisdom," 67–69.

⁵⁵ Collins, *Imagination*, 160.

worldview, both the inner, private one and the social, shared outer one, appear in this sequence. It features prominently the structuring aspect of time, specifically time as relatively short before a qualitatively new age begins (4:26–27; 4:33–37; 4:44–50). Already the view that evil and suffering must reach a peak before being wiped away has supplanted the older view of suffering as a constant reminder of past disobedience. The apocalyptic determinism depicted in the playing with numbers and time, while theologically related to a return to faith in God's control of history and the freedom to have hope in the future, psychologically is a way to come to grips with the suffering and rage that results from personal trauma. Ezra's question at 4:51 confirms the individual and group aspects of this creativity: "Do you think that I shall live until those days? Or who will be alive in those days?" The angel defers the question, keeping the mechanisms of fantasy, projection, and creativity feeding on the combined emotions of hope and fear, frighteningly illustrated by the nightmarish depiction of the signs of the end (4 *Ezra* 5:1–12).⁵⁶

The second vision functions in much the same way, with a return to Creation (6:1–6), a query about the dividing of the ages (6:7), and an account of the culmination, then blotting out, of evil in the world (6:24–28). But the third vision takes Ezra's edification concerning the times to another, fuller level. Once again there is a plaintive historical review, this time recited by Ezra himself, but in an allegory the angel actually makes a point of giving an explanation in human terms (7:3–10). This moment is one in which, as mentioned above, Ezra and Uriel in fact do connect in the interpretive scheme; not surprisingly, Uriel then takes the opportunity to push his charge further. He asks,

But now why are you disturbed, seeing that you are to perish? And why are you moved, seeing that you are mortal? And why have you not considered in your mind what is to come, rather than what is now present? (7:15–16).

This statement, we should note, tacitly acknowledges that Ezra's morbid, nihilistic thoughts have ceased. Now the seer is disturbed by the prospect of dying. In Freudian terms, Ezra has become reinvested in his ego; survival and existence matter again. Finally, the past is becom-

⁵⁶ The angel at this point is either Uriel or Jeremiel—see 4 *Ezra* 4:36.

ing truly past and the present truly present. Now the fantasy response can begin to play in the future.

And it is a grand fantasy Ezra (and the reading audience) receives at 4 *Ezra* 7:26–44, displaying almost all of the psychoanalytic earmarks of apocalypticism that I have noted in this study. It offers the impending revelation of what was formerly concealed: the spectral city and the Messiah. With the Messiah's death, the *Endzeit* becomes the *Urzeit* for seven days; the judgment of souls follows, with reward and punishment meted out. It depicts the geography of heaven and describes the judgment day in surreal, dreamlike terms:

A day that has no sun or moon or stars, or cloud or thunder or lightning or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High. (7:39–42)

Even the radical split between the two worlds, heavenly and earthly, latent and manifest, is reiterated by the angel in the conversation following this vision (7:50).⁵⁷ The rest of this third vision continues Ezra's dialogue with Uriel, but in a much more philosophical and rational manner than had been the norm before. Thompson notes that the antagonistic dialogue has come to an end, and the seer is no longer complaining but is "properly fearful and submissive to the divine will." At any rate, "the tension is gone."⁵⁸ Ezra no longer needs to interact with his divine interpreter on a raw, emotional level; he is rapidly gathering and expressing the moral foundations of his new worldview. Still he has not yet reconciled his emotional development with his new, long-sought understanding. For instance, the displacement of Ezra's feelings onto the dust of the earth at 7:62–63 demonstrates that many of the emotions on display are still, here almost literally, just below the surface.

⁵⁷ Stone argues that the two 'worlds' refer to 'ages,' a corrupt one, which has passed, and the pure one to come (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 228, 231). To a degree, this explication is only a temporalization of the spatial imagery of the text, and certainly the manifestation of the new world marks the beginning of the new age. However, the discourse both before and after the statement relies heavily on its 'earthiness,' in explicit or implicit comparison to the heavenly world, so the concept of the transformation from one world to the next must hold some weight that the transition between ages does not.

⁵⁸ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 146.

O earth, what have you brought forth, if the mind is made out of the dust like the other created things! For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it.

Burkes suggests this moment “may represent the nadir of Ezra’s hopes and emotions.”⁵⁹ Ezra may no longer be directing these annihilating wishes at himself, but he still has them, transferred from ‘in his mind’ to the matter that makes the mind—a symbolic move from inner to outer in its own right. The integration of unconscious and conscious worlds will occur in the Fourth Vision.

Revealing and Concealing

The themes of revelation and concealment shared by apocalyptic and psychoanalytic literature are strong in 4 Ezra. In the first vision, in a phrase as Freudian as it is prophetic, Uriel tells Ezra that “the things that you desire will be disclosed to you” (4:43; Vulgate: *tibi demonstrabitur de his quae concupiscis videre*). He mentions concealment of the “way of truth” in the vision of the signs of the end (5:1–12). The appearance of the invisible city at 4 Ezra 7:26 has already been mentioned; a land “which is now hidden” will also be disclosed. At the end of the same vision, Ezra is told, “This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone have I shown these things” (7:44), implying that, though ‘prescribed’ and foreordained, it has remained hidden from any human until now. Finally, Uriel states that at the day of judgment, a number of good things will happen, including the appearance of truth (7:114). All of these points are very much connected to Ezra’s painful frustration over his inability to understand the world, for he feels that the world *is* knowable, yet knowledge has been cut off from him. Finally, the grand gesture of concealed revelation in 4 Ezra 14 is enacted just as Ezra and his companions are inspired to write seventy books in a state of mantic revelation—books only to be known to the wise among them.

Wombs and Mothers

Relatedly, mothers, wombs, and the act of bearing children consistently represent aspects of the coming of the unseen world in this text. Birth

⁵⁹ Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 214.

works as a symbol on many levels, but one key understanding that is not made fully explicit until the Fourth Vision is its analogy with revelation, or the emergence of creation out of emptiness or chaos.⁶⁰

The first instance of the use of this imagery (4 *Ezra* 4:40–43) relates specifically the understanding of the determination of time in the last days. The angel Jeremiel tells Ezra, "Go and ask a woman who is with child if, when her nine months have been completed, her womb can keep the child within her any longer." Ezra replies that it cannot. Jeremiel continues, then, saying,

In Hades the chambers of the souls are like the womb. For just as a woman who is in travail makes haste to escape the pangs of birth, so also do these places hasten to give back those things that were committed to them from the beginning. Then the things that you desire to see will be disclosed to you.

This discussion thus links the symbols of birth to both the disclosure of concealed knowledge and the actual events of the eschaton. In psycho-apocalyptic fashion, sexual, creative, and overdetermined symbolism points forward ("then the things that you desire to see will be disclosed to you") and back ("things that were committed to them from the beginning"), while indicating a manifest meaning which conceals a latent one, revealed by outside interpretation ("In Hades the chambers of the souls are like the womb."). This symbolic scheme is continued at 4 *Ezra* 5:46–56, but at 6:21 the metaphor becomes reified, the latent and manifest meanings collapsed in a fantasy of the future. Yet the symbols utilized still indicate the amount of psychic distortion exerted on the seer's (or author's) imagination in the text's preternatural description of infants speaking at one year of age and of women giving birth prematurely after three or four months to children who will, nonetheless, "live and dance."

This fantasy, interestingly enough, seems to reverse Ezra's own stated wish at 5:35 that his mother's womb should have been his grave.

⁶⁰ As Galambush does for Ezek, Humphrey traces 4 *Ezra*'s motif of the woman as city/building back to traditional Biblical symbolism. As noted earlier she emphasizes the import of the transformation of women in apocalyptic texts. She demonstrates that this transformation consistently is one from a place of weakness not only to power but royalty (Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 21–23). The womb imagery in 4 *Ezra*, it should be noted, also juxtaposes a lack of power (the inability to alter the course of a pregnancy; infancy) with the supernatural powers that act as harbingers of the New Age.

In the realm of fantasy, however, this kind of symbolic distortion only reveals the censorship at work in the creative levels represented by Ezra and the angelic figures: Ezra's own association of birth and death, in the mouth of the angel, appears as miraculous births, doomed by the Endtime. This symbolism is further literalized in Ezra's speech at 8:8–14. The tendency to literalize his unconscious symbolism pushes him toward an actual transformation of reality.

Ezra's creative manifestations here foreshadow two major literary moments in the text: the great and psychologically decisive revelation of the heavenly Jerusalem from the figure of the Weeping Woman in the Fourth Vision (9:38–10:59) and Ezra's separation from the community with his scribes to write the sets of books that will steer the Jews towards the future.⁶¹ These seemingly divergent points are theologically related. Those who considered themselves privy to the secret books most certainly believed that were to continue on as the leaders of the New Israel. The most splendid sign of its continuity with the former glory of the city and people appears in the Vision of the Weeping Woman. In this vision Ezra's old worldview coalesces into a new understanding from which he can help build a future for his people.

Recovery in the Future

If the scribal revelation is the key to the sociology of this text, undoubtedly the revelation in Vision Four is the key to its psychology. Even simply on narrative and formal grounds, it marks a distinct break from the dialogical style that preceded it and foreshadows the Endtime scenarios of Visions Five and Six.⁶² But the themes of loss, mourning, and healing transformation come so to the fore in this vision that the psychological dynamics are difficult to ignore. As Michael Stone's commentary remains not only the most extensive treatment of 4 Ezra to date but also the most psychological, I will rely heavily on the groundwork he has laid concerning this vision.

Ezra sees a woman who was "mourning and weeping with a loud voice, and was deeply grieved at heart" (4 Ezra 9:38). Her only son had collapsed and died on his wedding day, and now she intends to

⁶¹ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 317.

⁶² See, for example, Brandenburger, *Die Verborgenheit Gottes*, 50–52; and Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 71.

"mourn and fast" until she herself dies (10:4).⁶³ Ezra chastises her, saying,

You most foolish of women, do you not see our mourning, and what has happened to us? For Zion, the mother of us all, is in deep grief and great humiliation. It is most appropriate to mourn now, because we are all mourning, and to be sorrowful, because we are all sorrowing; you are sorrowing for one son, but we, the whole world, for our mother. . . . Now, therefore, keep your sorrow to yourself, and bear bravely the troubles that have come upon you. For if you acknowledge the decree of God to be just, you will receive your son back in due time. (10:6–8, 15–16a)

He continues with a litany of offenses the Temple and city have suffered, when suddenly the woman is transformed. "The woman was no longer visible to me, but there was an established city, and a place of huge foundations showed itself" (10:27). He cries out for interpretation, and Uriel tells him:

The woman whom you saw, whom you now behold as an established city, is Zion. And as for her telling you that she was barren for thirty years, it is because there were three thousand years in the world before any offering was offered in it. And after three thousand years Solomon built the city, and offered offerings; then it was that the barren woman bore a son. And as for her telling you that she brought him up with much care, that was the period of residence in Jerusalem. And as for her saying to you, "When my son entered his wedding chamber he died," and that misfortune had overtaken her, that was the destruction which befell Jerusalem. And behold, you saw her likeness, how she mourned for her son, and you began to console her for what had happened. For now the Most High, seeing that you are sincerely grieved and profoundly distressed for her, has shown you the brightness of her glory, and the loveliness of her beauty. (10:44–50)

For this study's approach to apocalypticism as symbolic loss, we should find no better illustration of cultural recovery of symbol in transitional space, created in fantasy and structured in narrative, to link past ideals,

⁶³ This narrative bears a striking resemblance to the illustration of excessive mourning cited in *Mo'ed Qat.* 17b, in which R. Judah describes a woman with seven sons. One died, and she wept excessively. R. Huna advised her not to behave in such a manner. She ignored him, and the others sons died, apparently of neglect and lack of food. Finally, she herself dies of the same causes. The meaning for the Rabbis is this: "Whoever indulges in grief to excess over his dead will weep for another." On the other hand, the image of the mourning woman as Heavenly City also recalls the Kabbalistic claim that the Divine Presence had appeared at the Wailing Wall as a slim woman, dressed in black and weeping (noted in Elon, *Jerusalem*, 32).

present desolation, and future restoration of the 'True Israel.' Stone reflects the same insight:

His worldview is starting on a process of new integration in the light of his experiences. This new integration, involving internalization of the conclusions the angel has offered him, was perhaps catalyzed (and represented, for, after all, the woman was a projection) by the need to comfort another person. There is deep psychological insight in this representation.⁶⁴

Of note, first of all, is the visionary frame. Like the other visions, this one comes after a seven day period of ritual prayer, although this time the angel instructs him not to fast, but to eat the flowers of the field where he will be sitting. (The flowers may have some hallucinogenic properties, or the diet itself produced a different sort of meditative result than either fasting or eating meats and bread.) In any case Ezra does as he is told, and at the end of seven days he voices a prayer replete with plant imagery, comparing the Law to a seed that has been sown in the people.⁶⁵ Yet unlike other cases in nature or society in which something has unsuccessfully received something else yet still remains, "we who have received the Law and sinned will perish, as well as our heart which received it; the Law, however, does not perish but remains in its glory" (4 Ezra 9:36–37). According to Ezra, it is simply not natural that the Jews are eradicated because the Law did not take hold in them. Their absence, either now or in the future, seems to him unnatural or, worse, unreal. It is a paradox of the highest existential level that demands resolution.

The answer to Ezra's prayer comes not in the now-expected form of dialogue with the angel but rather with the appearance of the woman, who is not immediately thought to be anything other than what she claims. Just as in the dialogues there was an apparent discon-

⁶⁴ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 320.

⁶⁵ Such phraseology is typical of 4 Ezra, notes Stone, who compares this passage at 9:31–35 with 4 Ezra 3:19–20. It is thus yet another example of the tight symbolism throughout the text that offers one level of association at the manifest level but, referring to fecundity as it does, ties into the meanings of the other symbols mentioned above—motherhood and wombs—on a more unconscious level. This theme is also clearly associated with its opposite, the great theme of the text that this study has been exploring: death and loss. This fact is corroborated by the interplay between the people's receipt of something living or life-preserving and then, in this prayer, perishing as a people as the Law lives on. Burkes notes that plant imagery is important in wisdom literature, with which 4 Ezra has clear associations ("‘Life’ Redefined: Wisdom and Law in Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch," *CBQ* 63 [2001]: 60 n. 20).

nect between Ezra's questions and the angel's answers that actually propelled the visionary's psyche toward resolution and consolation, such a disparity exists also in this break in form and message.⁶⁶ When he comes to his understanding of events, it is not really completed through persuasive dialectic with the angel or his own gradual, conscious coming to terms with his past—the final resolution happens all at once, in a vision that catches him off guard and transforms his position, as it itself is transformed from despairing mother to glorious city. The seer forgets his prayer and starts interrogating the woman, as described above. But now Ezra acts in the angel's role, trying to convey the authority of traditional responses to a grieving and desperate individual.

Stone rather extensively charts the role reversals among Ezra, the angel, and the woman.⁶⁷ In sum, Ezra adopts many of the same positions expressed by the angel in the dialogues to convince the woman that her mourning is not appropriate in these times, only to be rejected, unconsoled, by the griever. Thus he identifies with an earlier projection, the angel, while he dissociates himself from a new one, the woman. Yet the woman, while representing Zion of the past, present, and future, is at the same time Ezra *himself*, the disconsolate mourner for Zion. So notes Esler:

Here [4 *Ezra* 10:38–59] there is presented a direct equivalence between Ezra's situation in the dialogues and in his dealings with the woman. In each instance he is mourning over Zion.... In other words, Ezra's dealings with her represent exactly the same process of mourning, but at a symbolic and visionary level. Nothing new happens in this section of the work; it contains rather a reworking of the earlier material at a different level of human experience.⁶⁸

In this one encounter, all the earlier experiences are recapitulated, and all of the positions are somehow identified with the seer. Even Ezra's rage in all of its forms emerges in his irritation with the woman at 10:5–6. Thus the woman exists, in some sense, as Ezra's *Doppelgänger*, a hypostasis of all of his most deeply repressed anxiety and pain, which he misrecognizes as that of someone else.⁶⁹ The mourning woman symbolizes the 'return of the repressed' for Ezra.

⁶⁶ See Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 308, 311.

⁶⁷ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 312, 318–21.

⁶⁸ Esler, "Social Function," 112.

⁶⁹ Cf. Esler, "Social Function," 113.

Stone also notes that whereas the overt mourning component had all but disappeared from Ezra's interaction in the dialogues by the third vision, once Ezra "had accepted all that he was taught...the mourning for Zion reasserted itself."⁷⁰ At the very moment mourning returns as pivotal for the seer, in the externalized form of a mourning mother, the angel's arguments are truly his; he has internalized them and now unself-consciously presents them to critique another grieving individual. His empathic failure in response to the woman's loss also mirrors the angel's response to him in the dialogues, but he lacks his interlocutor's patience; moreover, there exists something more personal and threatening in this interaction, in that he cannot ultimately defer to the angel's authority.

As Stone observes, "Ezra's anger is directed against himself, against his own resurgent grief—how transparent is 'Do you not see our mourning' [10:6]?"⁷¹ With the woman, he confronts himself as he was previously, and it is a general truth that we are unable to tolerate faults in others that we possess ourselves, especially those faults we feel we have overcome. The recent convert and the recovered addict are harsher than anyone else on those who share their former lifestyles. (They also, like Ezra, later believe that only those who have undergone the same process of transformation can understand the experience and truly see the world as it is.) Ezra here is the recent convert, but a convert essentially at a cognitive, philosophical level. He has not learned to accept his past, to embrace it and integrate it into his new world-view—that is, to mourn it and thereby finally mourn the lost Temple. His whole being has not been transformed. That changes with what happens next.⁷²

With the sudden alteration of the vision, Ezra reverts to his earlier, self-annihilating state; his death wish takes grip of him one last time. He cries out, "Where is the angel Uriel...? For it was he who brought

⁷⁰ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 320.

⁷¹ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 320.

⁷² Esler takes issue with what he holds to be Stone's view of the subsequent transformation; i.e., that it is the act of solace by Ezra in Vision Four that brings it about. He emphasizes that at specific, identifiable points within the dialogues and even in the vision itself, Ezra's emotional focus shifts. Long before Ezra consoles this grieving woman, both his and the woman's transformation are inexorably underway (Esler, "Social Function," 111). I am not sure Esler categorizes Stone's position entirely accurately, but I believe he does state a fundamental truth about the relationship between the dialogues and this vision.

me into this overpowering bewilderment; my end has become corruption" (4 Ezra 10:28). When Uriel appears, Ezra lays there "like a corpse and [he] was deprived of [his] understanding" (10:30). Finally the seer pleads, "Speak, my lord; only do not forsake me, lest I die before my time," still feeling that death is imminent without understanding, and understanding lies beyond his human capacities (10:24–37). The connection between the power of his mourning and God's revelation of secret wisdom to him Uriel then makes clear:

[The] Most High has revealed many secrets to you. For he has seen your righteous conduct, that you have sorrowed continually for your people, and mourned greatly over Zion. This therefore is the meaning of the vision. (10:38–40)

The focus on mourning at exactly this point in the text is also the focus on the 'return of the repressed,' and its positive acknowledgment by the *angelus interpres* marks the moment at which Ezra and those who have traveled his emotional path vicariously or creatively through him are allowed finally to move beyond melancholia into true and productive mourning. That is to say, they allow themselves to do so. His experience is essentially a conversion, the effect of which is radically to reorganize his worldview and compel him to expect his physical and social worlds to be rebuilt to match it.⁷³

Both aspects of his future life are grounded on hierarchical distinctions. A Heavenly Temple will replace the earthly. Secret books will

⁷³ Stone regards the transformation of the woman into the city as Ezra's conversion (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 31–33), but argues at another point that the "the term 'conversion' is not really appropriate, since this is not an adherence to a new deity or faith. Sometimes the term 'intensification' is used to describe a type of powerful emotional experience that results in the restructuring of the personality in the light of the beliefs that were previously assented to but that did not affect the believer's perception of the world in the same way" (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 326–27). Humphrey, while disputing Stone, also eschews the perception that this incident depicts a conversion, showing that it is because of his previous stance that he is granted knowledge and transformation. This observation is valid, but a conversion does not necessarily require an open rejection of a previously held set of beliefs, but rather indicates a qualitatively new perspective on the world, a paradigm shift that expands the field of thoughts with new possibilities. William James posits, "To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities" (James, *Varieties*, 160). By this definition, I think the transformation undergone by Ezra the visionary can accurately be termed a conversion.

be kept for the wise, while Ezra will reproduce the canon for the rest. Once again, the feeling of the uncanny created by the return of the repressed is symbolized the future city of Zion, a building structure that is both real and not real, at once here and not yet here.⁷⁴ The uncanny sense is deliberately enhanced by the setting of the vision, which Uriel takes pains to point out, saying,

Therefore I told you to remain in the field where no house had been built, for I knew that the Most High would reveal these things to you. Therefore I told you to go into the field where there was no foundation of any building, for no work of man's building could endure in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed. Therefore do not be afraid, and do not let your heart be terrified; but go in and see the splendor and vastness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it, and afterward you will hear as much as your ears can hear. (10:51–55)

Not only had no building existed in that space before, but none could exist because of the structure that would appear there later. An imaginary structure to be revealed in the future has displaced any potential real-world building in the past. The conflict brought about by the image also comes across, then, in its historical (and thus commemorative) assertions about David and Solomon as its architects.⁷⁵ Since Ezra is confronted with the very temple/city structure he has pined for throughout the text, the uncanny return of the lost object operates here on the personal, unconscious level and the collective, cultural level at the same time.

Perhaps not incidentally, Stone notes that Uriel's explanation/instruction regarding the vision appears as a doublet (vv. 51–52 and 53–54), the reason for which has been a linguistic mystery.⁷⁶ It not only establishes that the vision is the earthly manifestation of the Heavenly Temple but that upon entering into this revelation, the seer will be inclined to be 'terrified' and 'afraid' by the 'splendor and vastness of the building,' which will lie in part beyond what his senses

⁷⁴ This contradictory state has caught the eye of a number of scholars. Stone states, "Questions as to whether the city is the heavenly Jerusalem or an eschatological one should probably be answered with an ambiguous 'Yes!'" (Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 335). Humphrey attests that the "city's ineffable quality makes it difficult to determine whether we are to conceive of Zion as possessing a present, although hidden glory, or whether this state is solely in the future" (Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 75).

⁷⁵ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 335.

⁷⁶ Stone, "City," 402–7.

can process. It would seem that the angel is alluding to an uncanny vision awaiting the seer inside the manifest city, and the traditional paradoxes of uncanny doubling in the vision of the Heavenly Temple, while 'appearing offscreen' in this vision, make themselves known in the very language that reveals their existence.

The mother symbol, manifest at points throughout the text, finds its ultimate significance here as well. On top of all the birth and womb symbolism woven into the dialogues, the traditional understanding of Zion as a wife and mother remains in the background until it is made explicit at 4 *Ezra* 10:7: "For Zion, the mother of us all, is in deep grief and great humiliation."⁷⁷ As the angel himself explains (4 *Ezra* 10:45–48), the woman/city is a commemorative symbol encompassing the entire history of Jerusalem, even its divine future. All that Zion was and is in Ezra's former worldview, tied so inextricably into his identity and his personal feelings of loss, rage, and rejection, materializes externally to him as a grieving mother, whose story recapitulates the story of his nation's holy city. As the seer argues with the woman that the larger picture demands an end to self pity, thereby demonstrating the termination of his own psychic and emotional need to cling to his loss, the vision changes into an 'established city' (10:27; Vulgate: *civitas aedificabatur*).⁷⁸ This image represents the solid and certain future for Ezra and his people, one that is beautiful and compelling but not yet manifest permanently. It is, unlike any work done by humans, ideal and perfect.

The angel directs Ezra to explore this vision, an action to which readers are not privy and that once again reveals and conceals in the same symbol. Humphrey insightfully equates the act of entering the city with Ezra's act of consoling the woman, or "entering into her grief."⁷⁹ The specifics of Ezra's conversion for the future are attained in an experience as mysterious, yet tantalizingly implied, as his exploration of this divine structure. The chapters of the text that follow concern visions that structure the knowledge of the events of the future,

⁷⁷ As we will see in the next chapter, for 2 *Bar.* this association operates much more in the foreground, on the surface.

⁷⁸ See Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 75–76, on the nuances of the translation from the Latin.

⁷⁹ Humphrey, *Ladies and the Cities*, 80. Of course, the sexual—even incestual—overtones of this scene cannot escape the eye of the psychoanalytic observer, which adds another layer of psychological force to the reading of this vision as representing the return of the repressed.

but its audience knows that its protagonist has moved once and for all from his emotional investment in the structure of the past. Therefore he can finally receive that knowledge not as one working through the psychological impact of a loss, but as a renewed individual working towards his complete recovery in a changed world.

Visions of the End in 4 Ezra

After the transformative Vision of the Weeping Woman, 4 Ezra contains two more visions and a commissioning of the seer to write down scriptures revealed to him. The first of these visions (4 Ezra 11:1–12:35), the fifth in the text and sometimes called The Eagle Vision, explicitly models itself (as it indicates at 12:11) on Daniel 7, referring to that text's fourth kingdom, the most corrupt and therefore last of the worldly kingdoms. The second (13:1–56), the sixth in the text and sometimes referred to as The Man from the Sea, concerns a future messiah who, using powers from the divine realm, battles a great multitude of men and thus brings peace to the earth.

These visions, however, enrich and structure in time a sentiment evinced throughout the dialogues, that the current earthly realm must suffer destruction at the hands of God for its wickedness, which will only continue to increase until such time as divine judgment is brought down upon it (4 Ezra 4:39; 5:1–13; 6:18–28; 7:26–44, with reference to a messiah; 7:112–15; 8:49–62; 9:5–13). As it happens, these verses generally reflect the standard apocalyptic scenario. So what is the relationship between the omens of the future contained within the dialogues and those that are presented in their own visions at the end of the book?

In the earlier passages, we can see the way in which the dense, over-determined apocalyptic symbolism points forward to a new resolution as it points back to traditional expectations. It directs the subject towards a cessation of anxiety, even as much as it is an expression of it. 'The time of threshing' of 4:39 culminates the agricultural metaphor for the eschatological time of judgment begun at 4:28, which may also be an allusion to canonical prophecies of the Day of the Lord.⁸⁰ It also is of a piece with other earthy concerns in the book, such as 4 Ezra 8:31–35, just prior to the appearance of the Weeping Woman,

⁸⁰ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 98.

in which it is the Law that is sown. The astronomical catastrophe of 5:1–13 may draw on similar imagery from 1 Enoch, especially the falling stars of v. 5 (cf. 1 En 86), but other details of this passage (sea, salt waters, fire, men at war) find loose parallels in the Vision of the Man from the Sea (4 Ezra 13), though they are recast in the positive context of the advent of the messiah.⁸¹ As for 4 Ezra 7:26–44, Stone suggests that here the author's eschatological scheme is first set forth in a systematic way, but more important, "[n]early every element in it is paralleled somewhere else in the book."⁸² Even where details are singular and do not immediately resonate with others, there are many traditional, literary, psychological, and creative reasons why the specific content of the earlier passages contributes to the force and meaning of the later ones.

Before Ezra's conversion these fantasies of the future dealt mainly with the tribulations about to be visited upon the earth, as opposed to either the destruction of the wicked *per se* or the utopia brought about by the messiah's arrival. In this period of Ezra's emotional life, unconscious rage is still seeking an outlet. Where it is not melancholically directed back at himself, it attacks the population at large. When he pours his unworthy heart out to God's messenger, Ezra voices melancholic self-loathing, and though it is veiled, that same messenger expresses Ezra's (and here, perhaps, the author's) unconscious misanthropy. As the previous chapter illustrated in the Book of Ezekiel, this framework demonstrates the movement outward in melancholic mourning, first from the pure narcissism concentrated in the individual's ego, then to other individuals, then to specific groups, finally to abstract enemies who are perfectly evil and face total annihilation. And so it is in the messianic conflicts of Visions Five and Six.

These visions offer additional elements that structure the pre-conversion fantasy into a compelling Endtime worldview. Both build on Daniel's four-kingdom schema; 4 Ezra 12:11, again, refers to "your brother Daniel" in the course of the interpretation of the Fifth Vision. And like Dan 8 and 10–12, the Fifth Vision is mostly comprised of a thinly veiled historical review up to the author's present that, as noted above, allows modern readers to date it with confidence to the period

⁸¹ Fire and melting in the presence of God or his warriors have many canonical and non-canonical antecedents from which the author of 4 Ezra could have drawn as well. For example, fire issues from God's mouth in Ps 18:9. See Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 212.

⁸² Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 204; 206.

of the Flavian emperors. Several uses of the past are at work all at once. Within the Exilic and prophetic conceits, an earlier, canonical text is recalled, one also with an Exilic frame and dealing with an imperial attack on Judea. Into this textual allusion the current historical/political situation is interjected, and incorporated into the historical scenario is the ancient Messianic tradition. The individual, cultural, and social identities embodied by the Ezra figure begin to coalesce in this vision. The Sixth Vision then eliminates in fantasy the symbolic source of trauma once and for all (cf. Ezek 9).

In these visions, the fragmentation of identity brought about by the fall of the Second Temple and its aftershocks for a generation is momentarily patched together in this apocalyptic fantasy, and a unified worldview is recovered. The angel whom Ezra beseeches acknowledges the seer's singular achievement in healing and the direction it has taken him when he concludes his interaction with him. He tells him,

This is the interpretation of the dream which you saw. And you alone have been enlightened about this, because you have forsaken your own ways and have applied yourself to mine, and have searched out my law; for you have devoted your life to wisdom, and called understanding your mother. (13:53–55)

Those ways that Ezra has forsaken include attachments to his past that he could not break until now. He is singled out by God in this achievement, as he was for his righteous mourning at 4 *Ezra* 10:39. He has now applied himself to God's ways, which occurs in parallel with searching out his Law, the foundation of a worldview for the future.

Burkes has detailed the ways in which Law and wisdom become inextricably interrelated in post-Exilic literature, perhaps most clearly in the writings of Ben Sira. Still, in apocalypses like 4 *Ezra* as well as 2 *Baruch*, examined in the next chapter, the unity of Law and wisdom is the condition for nothing less than *life* itself. To wit, says Burkes, throughout the dialogues the loss of the Law is equated with the loss of Jewish life, both literally and socially. Therefore the "literal conquest of death" is the result of a return of and to the Law.⁸³ Burkes thus underscores the fact that at the heart of these apocalypses is the loss and death that resulted from the decimation of Jerusalem. The effect of this calamity is felt most deeply in the disruption of a sense

⁸³ Burkes, "'Life' Redefined," 55–59.

of cosmic order and security, traditionally represented in Judaism by Mosaic Law, which is presented in 4 Ezra as the fundamental force of life in the world from the time of Creation and which was undermined not by Jewish failure in 587 B.C.E. or 70 C.E. but by Adam's fall itself. Notes Burkes, "The death of the one, the death of the nations, and the death of the present world are all under consideration, and mortality on every level is rooted in Adam's rebellion."⁸⁴ It is no accident that, in the theological reconsideration of the past, 4 Ezra brings about a re-appreciation of the Law that is now inextricably intertwined with life and survival itself. Simply put, all that was lost in the subjugation of Judea—life and Law, individual and society, past and future—is here recovered in a vision of a new world built from the ruins of the old. Tellingly, this transformation of the past for the future shifts responsibility for the Jewish trauma from a national relationship to YHWH that is no longer tenable to an eternal human relationship in the Law. In other words, the Temple, as a social and physical connection to God, must be made new, but the Law is incorruptible and unchanged since Creation and need only be recovered by humanity.⁸⁵ Thereby the inexplicable pain of the past is transformed into an ideal for endurance in the future, and the work of mourning itself nears completion.

As the old psychological symbols find their place in the new world, retaining their importance but not their desperate ties to the past, a subtle but key identification is made explicit. Ezra devoted his life to wisdom and, the commendation reads, called understanding his *mother*. The mother assignation ties the symbolism in the conclusion of the scripture back to the work of mourning but also to the original trauma, the inability to understand. It subtly implies how much the need for love, empathy, and trust in the world are tied to the need for understanding. If Ezra and his community at some level regard the repossession of wisdom and the Law as tantamount to the recovery of a mother's love, then the first scripture examined in the next chapter, 3 Baruch, presents what would be for them an almost fully healed world.

⁸⁴ Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 222.

⁸⁵ Hermann Lichtenberger, "Zion and the Destruction of the Temple in 4 Ezra 9–10," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel (Community without Temple): Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 247–48.

CHAPTER FOUR

2 AND 3 BARUCH: "CEASE IRRITATING GOD"

4 Ezra and the apocalyptic text known as 2 Baruch are acknowledged to bear some relationship to one another and are often treated together in the scholarship. Like 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch dates from the time after the fall of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and it also advances questions concerning the destruction via a dialogue with a heavenly authority who provides both a foil and interpretation to the seer's experience.¹ Some have seen 2 Baruch as a traditional answer to the skepticism demonstrated in the early chapters of 4 Ezra. The case for the priority of 4 Ezra is often made based on an estimation of its superior originality or spontaneity. Others believe that at points, 2 Baruch is reacting against the attitudes and statements of the more skeptical 4 Ezra. Of course, determining 'originality' and 'spontaneity,' as this study has noted, is difficult indeed; to argue dependence as though a more original, creative, and astute text could not be based on one less so does

¹ 2 Bar. poses more ambiguities on date and provenance than 4 Ezra, but general consensus recognizes the events to which it refers are of the Roman era and not Babylonian. 2 Bar. 1:1 sets the action in the "twenty-fifth year of Jeconiah, king of Judah," which may be no more than a literary allusion, either directly to Ezek 40:1 or as an attempt to predate 4 Ezra's 'thirty years' (Collins, *Imagination*, 170, 179). However, C. Sigwalt associates this date with Jehoiakin who was deported in 597, only months after assuming the throne. If the measure is taken from the start of Jehoiakin's reign, it would date ten to twelve years before the fall of the First Temple. The twenty-five years then dates from ten or twelve years before the more recent calamity and thus places 2 Bar. twelve to fifteen years after it, or approximately 82 or 84 C.E. (Sigwalt, "Die Chronologie der syrischen Baruchapokalypse," *BZ* 9 [1911]: 397–98.) P.-M. Bogaert, following L. de Gry and B. Violet, takes the "twenty-fifth year" statement to denote the time after the fall of the Second Temple, i.e., 95 C.E. (Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch: introduction, traduction du syriaque et commentaire*, SC 144: 287–95; cf. the discussion in Gwendolyn Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed?: A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* (SBLDS 72; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1984), 105–7). Nicolae Roddy takes the phrase "two parts: weeks of seven weeks" from 2 Bar. 28:2 to mean 686 years since the fall of the First Temple, producing a date of 99 C.E. ("Two Parts: Weeks of Seven Weeks': The End of the Age as *Terminus ad Quem* for 2 Baruch," *JSP* 14 [1996]: 3–14). Saylor's review of the dating arguments concludes that none of them is definitive, but most indicators point toward a date around the end of the first century, give or take a few years (see Saylor, *Promises*, 102–10). Nothing indicates strongly that 2 Bar. is a Diasporic text, either; it is generally assumed to be of Palestinian origin, probably but not necessarily with a Hebrew original.

not inspire confidence. The dependence of 2 Baruch on 4 Ezra is not a critical component of the argument of this chapter if it is accepted, as many do today, that the two works address similar issues arising out of the Roman destruction of the Temple in different, but related, ways.² James Mueller, in including the Apocalypse of Abraham among the late first century reactions to the fall of Zion, calls this complex of questions and responses a “shared *Zeitgeist*.”³ However, as Collins states the matter,

Indeed it is easier to see why 2 Baruch should have responded to 4 Ezra than vice versa. . . . The case for the priority of 4 Ezra is not fully conclusive, but the balance of probability inclines in that direction.⁴

As I here relate the emotional tenor of the two texts to the model of mourning employed by this study, and assume that the degree of healing is in some way reflective of the amount of time that has passed since the trauma, I concur with this assessment. For the purposes of this study, 2 Baruch appears to be a manifestation of realities further along the healing arc, and emotionally it can be said to follow 4 Ezra. Still, as two texts arising out of essentially identical cultural situations, whatever their relationship they can easily be understood as variant responses to the same pressing questions that were on the minds of many, if not all, Jews of the time.⁵

Yet another reason the texts are productively analyzed together is the overt emphasis on a recognizable process of consolation in each. Attention given to the structure of consolation in 2 Baruch takes shape comparatively much later in the scholarship, but consistently 4 Ezra is its model in this regard. A concise illustration of this assessment is found in Gwendolyn Saylor’s “2 Baruch: A Story of Grief and Consolation.”⁶ Saylor states that the

² Cf. Saylor, *Promises*, 129–34; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 287.

³ James R. Mueller, “The Apocalypse of Abraham and the Destruction of the Second Jewish Temple,” in *SBLSP 1982*, 343–44.

⁴ Collins, *Imagination*, 179–80.

⁵ The issues concerning dependence surrounding 4 Ezra and 2 Bar. are usefully summarized by Thompson, *Responsibility*, 149 n. 1 as well as Saylor, *Promises*, 129 n. 23, and Collins, *Imagination*, 179–80. For arguments on the side of the priority of 4 Ezra, see Box, “Introduction,” 553–56, and B. Violet, *Die Apokalypsen des Esra und des Baruch in deutscher Gestalt* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1924), 81–90; on the priority of 2 Bar., see Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 113–16.

⁶ Gwendolyn Saylor, “2 Baruch: A Story of Grief and Consolation,” in Richards, *SBLSP 1982*, 485–500; Saylor restates her treatment in *Promises*. Others for whom this

author of 2 Baruch responds to the events of 70 C.E. by composing a story—a story in which Baruch and then his community move from grief to consolation.⁷

Sayler underscores the interplay in this movement among the seer's narrative, its author, and the seer's community.⁸ As I have endeavored to do for Ezekiel and 4 Ezra, the specific formal and structural features that yield this textual movement can be interpreted psychoanalytically. The unconscious aspects represented in this confluence of creative factors move the apocalyptic seer and a reader, potentially sharing similar cultural and/or biographical concerns, toward the same resolution.

The Seer's Worldview in 2 Baruch

Of course, for all their similarities, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch are significantly different in attitude and conclusion. This difference is telegraphed from the beginning by the fictive situations into which each visionary is placed. Once again, the Temple that appears in the text is not the Second but the First, as 2 Baruch opens with a perfectly contrived fiction in which the Babylonian Conquest is occurring at present. Ezra reflects on the desolating event from a distance; geographically, from Babylon, and temporally, from thirty years in the future, likely close to the author's actual time. The seer Baruch, on the other hand, witnesses the destruction as it happens all around him, and reacts to it

aspect is significant include Thompson, *Responsibility*, and Fredrick James Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch* (SBLDS 78; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985). Even in his relatively brief treatment, Nickelsburg notes of the author of 2 Bar., "His own grief has given way to consolation" (*Jewish Literature*, 287).

⁷ Sayler, "2 Baruch," 485.

⁸ From the start, Sayler's framework for 2 Bar. is that of a story composed to respond to the events of 70 C.E. She pays particular attention to the narrative introductions and conclusions of the blocks of text that compose it, and notes the importance of time in the narratives, evident from the start of the book. The time element becomes especially important in Baruch's interaction with his community, as he indicates the traumas they endure now are only temporary; hence, life will improve radically in the future (e.g., chs. 34, 43–45). More specifics about who among the community will survive in the next age are given at 2 Bar. 41–42. Ultimately, Sayler finds the concerns of 2 Bar., both as a story and as an attempt of a people to make sense of and even supersede the destruction of Jerusalem as a people, ingrained in the text's structure, content, and use of symbolism. As such, her analysis, both here and in the expanded format of *Promises*, is a most valuable and consistent source of validation for my own observations on this text.

immediately.⁹ This distinction bears on the psychology of each position. Both authors are writing from essentially the same place in history (and probably both in Palestine), but 4 Ezra's offers a narrative that bridges the seer's present and past to show the trauma's effects are still with him. By contrast 2 Baruch's author creates a narrative set in the past, within the trauma itself, as if to define its meaning as it unfolds.

The major literary effect of this distinction is that in 2 Baruch the apocalyptic seer's focus moves past the details of the earthly loss and on to the idealized certainties of heavenly reality much earlier than in the other two texts I have examined. This text exhibits few melancholic traits; instead, it appears eager to embrace the radical change on the way. This stance could indicate that as a text, it was created and propagated by some in the Temple-less society who were at all levels ready to reformulate their expectations again. The principal basis upon which to do so was imagined, in the text, as a return to the Law.¹⁰ A.F.J. Klijn states in his introduction to the 2 Baruch text,

2 Baruch is extremely important for an understanding of early Judaism since it copes with the catastrophe of A.D. 70. After the destruction of the Temple, a new period arrived that was characterized by the influence of the rabbis. The author opened a way for studying the Law after a period of apocalyptic expectations. He was an expert on both apocalyptic imagery and rabbinic teaching, and, as such, was one of the Jews who managed to bring Judaism into a new era.¹¹

Positioning the figure of Baruch at the time of the Fall to advocate the Law thereafter underscores the reasons for the selection of this pseudographic title. As Jeremiah's scribe during the original Temple calamity, Baruch recorded the great prophet's frustration with the people of Jerusalem and their foolishly misplaced trust in traditional cultic beliefs to spare them from disaster. In the first century C.E., promoting a full-fledged return to the Law as it was then understood required the authority of such a revered figure, one who, at the same time, was known as a scribe. He possessed the status needed for both a trustworthy interpretation of the matters at hand (both hidden and revealed) and the promulgation of his revelation in scripture. Like Ezra in this

⁹ Saylor, *Promises*, 130–31.

¹⁰ Cf. Saylor, *Promises*, 116; Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 124–27.

¹¹ A.F.J. Klijn, introduction to "2 [Syriac Apocalypse of] Baruch," in Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic*, 620.

regard, the apocalyptic Baruch is given some of the attributes of a second Moses.¹²

The subject of the Law as the recovered worldview will be treated below, but for now it is important to say that Baruch's pervasive attitude toward humanity and its role in bringing such calamity upon itself is, simply put, that people have the capacity to understand and fulfill God's laws.¹³ This position is at obvious loggerheads with the first half of 4 Ezra, in which the seer laments that God's ways are completely inscrutable. Ezra's inability to understand his situation drives him out of a tense paralysis toward revelation and transformation. By contrast, in 2 Baruch not only is the plan of God's order reasonably accessible to the seer but so is God *himself*, as his own divine interpreter. This factor places Baruch at a very different emotional and psychological starting point than Ezra. Baruch surely mourns in pieces, a little bit at a time, but rarely with the hopelessness and self-absorption that has characterized some of his apocalyptic compatriots.

In fact, Alden Thompson highlights two key characteristics of Baruch the seer that may lend some insight into the mindset of his author. First, Baruch protests the problems of the world and their cosmic consequences much less than Ezra. His complaints are not directed against God so much as against the delay in the consummation, lest some may believe that God's patient suffering indicates a weakness on his part (21:19–21). Furthermore, not only does he frequently laud and praise God, but he actively speaks on his behalf and in his defense. Second, as opposed to Ezra's penchant for including himself among the perishing, Baruch consistently refers to himself as righteous or privileged, having not strayed from the Law in his lifetime (38:4; 48:22; 54:9–11).¹⁴

What do these observations reveal? Certainly that the seer is rather assured of himself, his place in the world, and the efficacy of his God,

¹² A.F.J. Klijn, "Recent Developments in the Study of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," *JSP* 4 (1989): 8; Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 129–30. In fact, 2 Bar. may be relying on the Rabbinic tradition that Baruch was Ezra's teacher, which could suggest that 2 Bar. is the later, dependent text that draws on this traditional relationship between master and pupil to deliver a firm rap on the knuckles, as it were, for promulgating a unduly pessimistic and elitist viewpoint. See Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 100–19. For a comparison of the Baruch figure in the extant texts, see Saylor, *Promises*, 111–15.

¹³ So notes Thompson, calling it the "dominant trend of the book" (*Responsibility*, 133). Cf. 2 Bar. 44:7; 46:5; 48:22; 51:3, 7; 63:3, 5; 85:2.

¹⁴ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 126; 132.

despite the devastation inflicted upon his homeland. The apocalypse conveys the impression that the author “still reels from the disaster and yet manages to pull together a coherent theological and practical response.”¹⁵ He is able to re-envision the circumstances of its fall, so that the angels initiate a preemptive strike against the Temple’s integrity rather than allow it to be truly destroyed by its enemies. He feels that the inherent ability to obey the divine Law places the onus of responsibility on humanity, and the punishment the people suffered as a result of falling away from it is not only just and appropriate but necessary and overdue. Anitra Kolenkow assesses the narratological significance of these texts when she calls Ezra a *rebuilder* who talks about the end of the world-age and Baruch a *witness* who emphasizes the continuities between one age and the next.¹⁶

The Social Context of 2 Baruch

A fairly specific historical group—indeed, even an individual or two associated with it—has been suggested to be the authorial source of 2 Baruch. In *Avot de Rabbi Natan* (A) 4, R. Yoḥannan (Johanan) ben Zakkai sees one of his students, R. Joshua, lamenting over the ruined Temple. R. Yoḥannan dismisses the necessity of the structure for Israel’s reconciliation with God. Then, Tractate *Baba Bathra* 60b speaks of a group of men, known in later tradition as the Mourners for Zion, who became ascetics in the wake of the destruction. They eat no meat and drink no wine, for these items had once been offered at the altar. But the same R. Joshua engages them in debate, leading them recognize to the absurdity of their actions. R. Joshua concludes,

Not to mourn at all is impossible, because the blow has fallen; to mourn overmuch is also impossible, because we do not impose on the community a hardship which the majority cannot endure.

R. Joshua was likely able to exercise such persuasion over this group because he *belonged* to it, and he took it upon himself to act as a realistic, and Yahwistic, corrective to this excessive mourning.¹⁷

¹⁵ Roddy, “Two Parts,” 13.

¹⁶ Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, “The Fall of the Temple and the Coming of the End: The Spectrum and Process of Apocalyptic Argument in 2 Baruch and Other Authors,” in Richards, *SBLSP* 1982, 248; also, Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 11–12.

¹⁷ J. Neusner, *Development of a Legend: Studies on the Traditions Concerning Yohanan Ben Zakkai* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 114. It is also noteworthy that neither these

Given the sentiment of 2 Baruch—mournful, but only to an appropriate point—speculation of authorship in this community has focused on Yohannan or, more often, Joshua.¹⁸ Fredrick James Murphy establishes the connection between R. Joshua's position vis-à-vis the Mourners for Zion and that of Baruch:

In presenting Baruch as a true mourner for Zion, the author insures that his work will be taken seriously by those of his contemporaries whom he wishes to reach. Those who are engaged in inordinate mourning for the destruction of the Second Temple would be more sympathetic to a figure who shared their attitude. As the author has God correct Baruch's attitude, that of his contemporaries is also corrected.¹⁹

Regardless of whether the creation of this text can be usefully and accurately located among a few important Rabbinic players of the first century, the social key to 2 Baruch implicit in Murphy's quote is the prophetic and pedagogical relationship Baruch has with his community.

Baruch has been viewed in the charismatic role of an 'inspired interpreter' with a devoted following.²⁰ Unlike Ezra, this seer seeks out

Rabbis nor 2 Bar. supports the overthrow of Rome in the realities of the present day (Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 140; Wright, "Social Setting," 85). See also Anthony Saldarini, "Varieties of Rabbinic Response to the Destruction of the Temple," in Richards, *SBLSP* 1982, 437–58.

¹⁸ Collins declares that "[e]ven more obviously than 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch is related to the rabbinic Judaism of the day" (*Imagination*, 178). He goes on to cite parallels between the departure of Baruch and Jeremiah from Jerusalem and that of Johanan ben Zakkai during the Roman siege. The teachings, he also notes, have been compared to those of Johanan's disciple, Joshua ben Hananiah, as well as those of R. Akiba. Furthermore the "messianic expectation of the book fits well with the ideas of these sages" (Collins, *Imagination*, 178). Bogaert tentatively identifies Baruch's author with R. Joshua (*Apocalypse de Baruch*, 443). See also Klijn, "Recent Developments," 8; and Kolenkow, "Review of F.J. Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch*," *JSJ* 18 (1987): 93.

¹⁹ Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 81. Saylor, however, recognizes a difference in the way in which 2 Bar. and the Rabbis regard the leaders of the community; namely, the leaders depicted in the text act more like scribes. She does admit, though, that like later Rabbinic schools Baruch emphasizes the instruction and interpretation of the Torah. She also compares the ingroup/outgroup dynamic of 2 Bar. that appears critical of the Temple cult to that of the Qumran community, but notes that there is no indication that this text has conspicuous ties to a priestly group. Saylor determines that the "contribution of 2 Baruch to an understanding of the historical situation in Palestine at the end of the first century C.E. can be summarized in one word—diversity" (Saylor, *Promises*, 118).

²⁰ J.E. Wright, "The Social Setting of the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch," *JSP* 16 (1997): 82; Wright, "Social Setting," 92–93. Wright elaborates this assertion in "Baruch: His Evolution from Scribe to Apocalyptic Seer," in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed.

other members of his society so that he may instruct them, and in so doing, holds nothing back. Baruch's communal power is evident in the despondent reaction of the people when they believe he is about to leave them (2 Bar. 31–34). He clearly is a charismatic leader who is not only concerned with imparting his message but also with fulfilling his role as teaching in the community, to the point of establishing successors in instruction.²¹

Even so, Baruch's relationship with his society exists on more democratic terms than Ezra's. Klijn imagines that living in a devastated Jerusalem is a small group of Jews that "feels itself responsible for the other Jews in exile."²² The 'whole people' asks him to share with the Diaspora Jews what he has made known to them. Baruch returns once again to the entire community (2 Bar. 77:1, 11; cf. 4 Ezra 13:40). They ask him to write a letter to the Jews in Babylon so that group will also be privy to his teachings (77:12). In this case the community participates in the preservation and transmission of his knowledge, as they do when some among them are instructed to continue his teachings for the people after he has gone.²³ The group the prophet identifies for this vocation includes his first-born son, a group of his friends called the Gedaliahs, and seven elders (44:1). Here his relationship to his successors ranges from the most personal to the most institutional, both serving the cause of carrying his message into the next age in as reliable a manner as possible while reaching as many segments of society at the same time. The message contained in this social selection can be fruitfully compared, once again, to that of the seer in 4 Ezra, who writes for the people, but on a much more structured, institutional level, both as a member of the 'wise' who holds some portions of his

M. Stone and T.A. Bergen; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 1998], 274–75) by comparing Baruch in 2 Bar. to the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran community. He views both in the context of a larger cultural transformation in Judaism, from the expectation of divine revelation possible in the 'Age of Prophecy' to a focus on Torah study and interpretation. Wright draws on the observations of Stone ("Ideal Figures and Social Context: Priest and Sage in Early Second Temple Age," in Miller, Hanson, and McBride, *Ancient Israelite Religion*, 575–86) and Fishbane ("From Scribalism to Rabbinism: Perspectives on the Emergence of Classical Judaism," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J.G. Gammie and L. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 440) for his understanding of the implications of this transition.

²¹ Sayler, *Promises*, 116.

²² Klijn, "Recent Developments," 10.

²³ 2 Bar. 45: "You, therefore, admonish the people as much as you can. For this is our work. For, when you instruct them, you will make them alive."

scribal activities apart from the larger society and as a re-creator of the written Law; and to Ezekiel, who may have had a school of followers who continued his work but by and large interacted with his fellow Exiles only to reprimand them (especially the Elders) or to be a negative sign for them.

In all, Baruch appears to operate fairly smoothly in his role as prophetic interpreter of the Law and receiver of revelation. His followers even initiate an expansion of his teaching both geographically, to the Exiles (and the 'nine and a half tribes,' whom Baruch himself adds as recipients), and temporally, in the guise of his prophetic successors, so that future generations may benefit from his wisdom. His relatively open, this-worldly stance toward society reveals a stalwart, positive, and mainly non-defensive psychology at work.

Loss in the Present

It is noteworthy that of all the texts examined in this project, the issue of mourning is present at the manifest level of 2 Baruch more than any other, which alone suggests that the emotional issues at root in these texts have finally come to the surface. In all, close to twenty separate references to mourning, grief, lamentation, or their ritual expressions can be counted in this text (2 Bar. 5:6-7; 9:2; 10:5, 8b; 11:2-3; 12:5; 21:1-2; 32:5, 8; 35:1-4; 44:1; 47:2; 48:41; 52:2-3; 67:2; 73:2-3; 75:86; 82:1).²⁴ Like 4 Ezra, much of the text is structured by seven day periods of mourning and/or fasting, followed by more dialogue with God or the revelation of a vision. One of the most telling of the early references

²⁴ We should also note the curious reference to the seer's being "guilty in Zion, that your haters will come to this place and pollute your sanctuary" (2 Bar. 5:1), as guilt remains part of the powerful complex of anxiety associated with the early stages of mourning or the repetition compulsion engendering melancholia. What he feels guilty about is unclear. A footnote in the translation by Klijn used here asks, "Is it because his prayer was not heard (cf. ch. 3), or because he leaves the city (cf. 2:1)?" I am not sure why Klijn would think Baruch would feel guilt if his prayer in ch. 3 were not heard or, for that matter, why he believes that particular prayer was not heard, since the Lord gives a response in ch. 4. But it is interesting that Baruch expresses this emotion immediately after God's discussion of the heavenly Temple, revealed to the heroes of the past and now preserved with God until the Endtime. The guilt seems then to reflect the collective guilt over the events that have led to this calamity, *à la* Deuteronomistic theodicy, but also personal guilt, derived from his own ambivalence concerning his actions, the actions of God, and the worthiness of his people to be spared. As we shall see, the visionary experiences resolve this guilt fairly quickly.

comes after the first seven day mourning fast: a lamentation over Zion (10:6–19), then an apostrophe to Babylon itself, in which he states,

If you had lived in happiness and Zion in its glory, it would have been a great sorrow to us that you had been equal to Zion. But now, behold, the grief is infinite and the lamentation is unmeasurable because, behold, you are happy and Zion has been destroyed. (11:1–2)

The comparison itself bespeaks a distinction in Baruch's, or the author's, mind between an ordinary situation of remorse brought about by the events of life, on the one hand, and on the other that which he and his fellow Jews face now. To wit, the descriptions of the grief as 'infinite' and the lamentation as 'unmeasurable' surely signify the paralyzing, engulfing emotional state of melancholia.

But Baruch, portrayed as a witness to events, is revealed to have a unique perspective on what actually transpired on the Temple mount as the 'Babylonians' moved in. In a scene strongly reminiscent of Ezek 8–10, he is lamenting the fate of Zion and her people when he is picked up by 'a powerful spirit.' He sees four angels with fiery torches about to set the Temple ablaze (2 *Bar.* 6:2). Another angel removes the sacred artifacts from the Holy of Holies and has the earth swallow them up, "until it is said that [Jerusalem] shall be restored again for ever" (6:9). This angel announces to the others that these actions are defensive, to protect Zion from the boasts of her enemies; then they breach the Temple walls. Inviting the enemies of Jerusalem in, they claim that "he who kept the house has abandoned it" (2 *Bar.* 8:2; cf. Ezek 8:12, 4 *Ezra* 15:25–26).²⁵

The first step in mitigating the loss as a witness is to *see* the event; one may then construct a new picture of it. Here, the destruction becomes, in Baruch's (literal) view, essentially self-inflicted, an active defense against an otherwise passive victimization. The sacred items are divinely removed and protected by the earth, for there will be a time when they are needed again. Finally, when the Babylonians actu-

²⁵ Greenberg states that this position in 2 *Bar.* is also found in the destruction of the Temple in Ezek 9 (Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 1–20, 202–3). This scene conspicuously combines elements of several traditions besides Ezek. Murphy associates the four angels with those about to destroy the world in Rev 7:1–3. 2 Macc 2 also mentions hiding the Temple vessels. The tradition of God departing the Temple is preserved in both Josephus and Tacitus. On the adaptation of these traditions by 2 *Bar.*, see Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 93–96. Perhaps the tradition of the priests of the First Temple throwing the keys up to heaven during its siege, as recorded in *b. Ta'an.* 29a, informed this scenario as well.

ally 'conquer' the Temple, God has already abandoned it. Only the empty shell of the physical structure suffers any real damage.²⁶ But just as important, Baruch's subsequent interactions and dialogues demonstrate that despite appearances, God himself has not left.²⁷ He is still very active in the course of history and in the lives of the people who keep his Law. Not incidentally, one result of this radical reevaluation of the Temple's destruction is to critique and subvert any lingering traditional Temple piety.²⁸

Later, Baruch and Jeremiah perform ritual mourning for seven days, after which God sends Jeremiah to Babylon to support the people there. But Baruch must stay among the ruins of Jerusalem, "to share in Zion's desolation" (10:3). To share in a trauma is to participate in it, psychologically make it one's own experience, to go through what others have. Compared to Ezra, Baruch's response in his prayers, dialogues, and interaction with his community appears more empathetic to the positions set forth both by God and by others in the society.

While containing some very dark and powerful materials, from a psychological standpoint 2 Baruch is much more straightforward and less emotionally complex than 4 Ezra. The twists and turns, reversals and identifications so richly manifest in the Ezra text give way to a feeling of trust and security for Baruch, even before fully understanding the events witnessed by the seer. The traumatic and overwhelming aspects of this text are presented early on, concurrently with the description of the seizure and destruction of the city. After this initial,

²⁶ The move to the spiritual realm to explain events in the physical is a common trope in apocalyptic thinking, as it resolves cognitive dissonance by creating a situation in which the loss 'really' has not occurred; cf. Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (New York, Harper & Row, 1956; 1964), 27–28.

²⁷ Cf. Klijn, "Recent Developments," 8. Compare this theological stance, surprising in its own right in its depiction of God as directly involved with the historical events Baruch is witnessing all around him, to the initial shock that Ezekiel receives after having given his God up for lost, then finding him again five years later in a foreign land (see above, Chapter Two; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1:119).

²⁸ Murphy (*Structure and Meaning*, 90–92) examines the continuing role that the old Zionistic belief that God's name or presence dwells in the Temple has in shaping Baruch's—and God's—particular response here. There seems to be some supporting evidence from Josephus that those who fought the Romans gave up once the Temple fell, despite having the fortifications to continue, which William Farmer attributes to this ideology (*Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus* [New York: Columbia, 1956], 90–93). An example of this kind of traditional Temple piety is attributed to Baruch early in the narrative, namely the belief that natural processes on the earth rely on continued sacrifices at the sanctuary (2 Bar. 10:9–10; cf. Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 98–100).

albeit devastating, shock, Baruch carefully yet consistently engages in dialogue with God, gaining understanding and acceptance of God's position, and fully believing that what has happened will be resolved with time, for himself and his society.

The Dialogues

As in 4 Ezra, the titular visionary engages in a dialogue (2 Bar. 1–30) with a divine figure, but 2 Baruch represents that figure as YHWH himself. This decision may reflect the text's general depiction of God as in control from the start, his ways powerful but not incomprehensible and hence not requiring an intermediary. Or it may seek to return to the immediate intimacy of the earlier prophets, including Ezekiel, establishing Baruch's relationship to God, his message, and his authority once again with the phrase, 'the word of the Lord came' (1:1).²⁹ In any case, 2 Baruch hardly lets Baruch enjoy much of a psyche himself, despite not being forced to swallow any scrolls or participate in any such acts of psychic submission. He seems completely convinced of God's righteousness on its own merits.

God, in fact, initiates the dialogue with *his* complaint, a direct reversal of 4 Ezra.³⁰ Partly because of this inverted structure, partly because God himself is the character in this role, and partly because of Baruch's compliancy throughout the experience, the two interlocutors seem more like figures crafted to fit the needs of a scriptural treatise, with a careful eye on tradition, than the tortured split of a psyche at war with itself and its shattered ideals.³¹ From the outset, 2 Baruch is concerned with drawing a disillusioned Jew back into the comforts of Yahwistic tradition, even as its ruins seem to lie strewn about him. (See Figure 5.) Unlike Ezra, he requires no confrontation, no brutal lack of empathy, no radical transformation to accept the vision of God's healing future.

²⁹ Wright, "Baruch: His Evolution," 272; cf. Saylor, *Promises*, 113 n. 25.

³⁰ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 133.

³¹ Thompson observes as much, noting that Baruch is much less insistent and penetrating than Ezra during his dialogues, with the effect that the inadequacy of the divine response is not thrown into bold relief. This observation begs the question as to whether God's position is, in fact, inadequate. As Thompson notes, Baruch is essentially on the same side of the debate. The explosive tension so expertly exploited in 4 Ezra is by design eliminated in 2 Bar., requiring a very different dynamic to carry the mourning process forward (Thompson, *Responsibility*, 147–48).



Figure 5: "Baruch." From the *Doré Illustrated Bible*, Gustave Doré, 1866.

One indication of the degree to which 2 Baruch sets out to establish God's position as primary can be discerned in the first chapter. After a very short time-setting frame, God opens with this complaint:

Have you seen all that this people are doing to me, the evil things which the two tribes which remained have done—more than the ten tribes which were carried away into captivity? For the former tribes were forced by their kings to sin, but these two have themselves forced and compelled their kings to sin. (2 Bar. 1:2–3)

This opening statement perfectly illustrates 2 Baruch's use of the past. The last generation before fall of the Second Temple is here remembered not only as evil but more evil, and more culpable, than the tribes who suffered dispersal at the hands of the Assyrians. Establishing such a perspective in the minds of its readers, 2 Baruch justifies both that generation's subsequent calamities and the seer Baruch's quick movement from desolation to sympathetic support for God's actions. Hence this act of social remembrance sets the conditions for the portrayal of Baruch's own coming to terms with the event. As a leader and representative of the community in this text, not to mention protagonist of its narrative, the Baruch figure, like Ezekiel, elicits identification with him and encourages a vicarious movement toward recovery from the larger society, both within and outside of the text.

Though a positive journey lies ahead of him, Baruch himself begins from a point of total desolation. "O Lord, my Lord, have I therefore come into the world to see the evil things of my mother?" (3:1; used again in v. 2), he asks, referring to the evil that is about to befall the city of Jerusalem. Note that he employs the symbol 'mother' immediately, as opposed to 4 Ezra's relatively late use in the text.³² While 2 Baruch also alludes to mother and birth imagery in conjunction with either the events of the current age or with the signs of the Endtimes (2 Bar. 10:13b–16; 22:7; 48:16; and 73:7), it does not rival 4 Ezra's use of it as an overdetermined, psychologically revealing symbol. To be sure, 2 Baruch's use of 'mother' lacks the great transformative vision that solidified a number of themes and identifications in the other text. In this verse, 2 Baruch's author most likely utilizes an important, effective, but traditional symbol to express his feelings about the danger

³² Murphy relates 2 Bar.'s use of 'mother' to Second Isaiah (Isa 49:14–21; 50:1; 51:18; 54:1) as well as to its symbolic currency in the first century C.E., as indicated by Paul's use of it in Gal 4 (*Structure and Meaning*, 81).

impinging on his birthplace and home. But it is not a symbol rooted at the wellspring of his identity, a product of the unconscious revealing repressed love or rage and subject to the dynamics of his psyche—not to say that such emotions are not roiling under the surface.

Death and Mourning

Baruch's next declamation expresses the fact that he, too, has fantasies of resolving his fear and pain through self-annihilation: "If I have found grace in your eyes, take away my spirit first that I may go to my fathers and I may not see the destruction of my mother" (2 Bar. 3:2). This death wish underpins much of the first part of the dialogues. After he sends Jeremiah to Babylon, by God's request, he laments over Zion at the doors of the Temple, saying,

Blessed is he who was not born, or he who was born and died. But we the living, woe to us, because we have seen those afflictions of Zion, and that which has befallen Jerusalem. (10:6–7)

Finally in this speech he wishes that the planet could say to the dead, "You are more happy than we who live" (11:7).³³ After this point, the text refers to death several times as an external condition of existence (2 Bar. 21:22–23; 23:4; 83:17–18)—one that Baruch, however, is destined to escape (76:2).

Baruch's death wish seems to be shared by his followers. Along with their despairing reaction, when they believe he is about to leave them prophetless at 2 Bar. 33:3 ("And now, if you abandon us too, it would have been better for all of us that we [should] die first, and that then you should abandon us."), a return of this fear at ch. 46 reveals just how crucial his presence is in their lives. They wonder, "Where shall we again investigate the Law, or who will distinguish between death and life for us?" (46:3). Sayler understands this phrase to indicate that the people fear the end of revelation, and hence the interpretation of the Torah, rendering the Torah ineffective. By this token, the people's suicidal impulses derive from the same desperate need for understanding God's order that plagued Ezra.³⁴ In another example of role reversal in apocalyptic psychological dynamics, but one that suggests the

³³ Sayler also recognizes death wishes in these laments (*Promises*, 16), a notion echoed by Murphy (*Structure and Meaning*, 99) and Thompson (*Responsibility*, 134).

³⁴ Sayler, *Promises*, 116.

expanded social capacities brought on by healing, Baruch here acts in the role of divine interpreter for his community, aiding the end of their melancholia in the same way other angelic figures help transform the perspective of other seers. Such a correspondence underscores my assertion that in these texts the seers work through or catalyze a common sentiment, in large part because their community identifies with them and is attuned to their experiences, and vice versa.

This common sentiment, however, is transformed in its own way from the prophet's self-annihilating narcissism to a hopeful expectation for the future of his people. The certainty of the Endtimes takes on a quality of hope for Baruch, as it represents the new beginning, the 'True Israel,' that those who have not fallen away from the Law desperately need and deserve after suffering through the apostasy and devastation of the current age. That is, the author of 2 Baruch "has managed to convince himself that the consummation is indeed a genuine hope, and thereby a sufficient theodicy."³⁵ In fact, from the start, the survival of the entity he considers Israel retains such a prominent place in Baruch's worldview that he ties the fate of the universe to it:

For if you destroy your city and deliver up your country to those who hate us, how will the name of Israel be remembered again?...Or will the universe return to its nature and the world go back to its original silence? And will the multitude of the souls be taken away and will not the nature of man be mentioned again? (2 Bar. 3:5, 7-8)³⁶

We should also note in this passage the juxtaposition of the primal *Urzeit/Endzeit* imagery with the concern over the memory of Israel on the earth. These scenarios, which are part of Baruch's initial reply to the deity, indicate that loss does threaten to pull Baruch's constellation

³⁵ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 134.

³⁶ Cf. Thompson, *Responsibility*, 135. Heinz Kohut, a Self psychologist, theorized that with life experience, narcissistic injuries (such as those suffered in significant loss and resulting in melancholia) can be transformed into knowledge and wisdom as one begins to identify less with the Self and more with the world in which one lives. Yet this movement, Kohut says, is accompanied by sadness as one becomes invested in supra-individual ideals and participation in the world. This 'cosmic narcissism' does not represent grandiosity, but rather a triumph over a wish for self-annihilation. See Kohut, "Forms and Transformation of Narcissism," in *Self Psychology and the Humanities* (ed. Charles Strozier; New York: Norton, 1985), 119-20. I believe this transformation of narcissism could very well underlie Baruch's implied nexus between an idealized remnant of his people and the rest of the universe, the fate of one relying on that of the other. The same may also be said about the difference between the relatively anti-social 4 Ezra and the strong depiction of social leadership in 2 Bar.

of social symbols into the abyss of his traumatized psyche. The subsequent dialogues show that the prophet's position in his community, at once authoritative and compassionate, gives him the external structure necessary not to succumb.

The Work of Mourning

A catharsis of emotion, initially engendered by the first *shiva*-like fast (2 Bar. 9), follows these valleys of despair. Then a change in outlook and expectations occurs, beginning at ch. 13. Here, God makes his case for the rationality and comprehensibility of that which he has allowed to happen. At this point, the dialogues proper commence. But unlike Ezra, Baruch, for all his desolation, does not vigorously resist or question God's positions; he smoothly makes the transition from traumatized witness to committed apologist. Thompson marks the transition point, if there is a single, definitive one, at 2 Bar. 21:1–16, where praise for God for all intents and purposes supplants complaint in Baruch's discourse.³⁷ As has so often been the case, the psychological movement is in part structured by a concern with time, its divisions, and its determining effect on world and cosmic events, as at 13:2–12. Baruch's grief is presented as real yet attenuated in the course of the dialogues by his renewed trust in God's goodness and control over the events of the earth. Others accept his sincerity and insight at this point as well.

Baruch prepares the Elders for his absence, an act to which the group reacts with fear and lamentation: "Where are you going from us, Baruch, and do you leave us as a father who leaves his children as orphans and goes away from them?" (2 Bar. 32:9) This concern, along with the self-annihilating one at 33:5, makes obvious that abandonment remains an issue within the community. Its members identify with Baruch so strongly, their attachment suggests primal dependence. As God (the Father) and their Temple (their mother Zion) have left them, so too is Baruch, also a father figure, the remaining living link to their old worldview. They fear the seer will re-enact the primary loss they have just suffered.³⁸

³⁷ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 126–27.

³⁸ Sayler, "2 Baruch," 490. Sayler argues that the reaction of Baruch's community is modeled on the announcement of the destruction at the start of the book. Key

The seer assures them that his absence will be temporary, that he has to attend to important business that affects them all, and then he will be back (34:1). Thus Baruch does leave them as a father does, but only in the sense that parenting involves separation, and in that space between parent and child, as Winnicott asserts, new cultural realities are formed. In this sense, Baruch is Winnicott's 'good enough' parent.³⁹ Baruch's speech about the evil confronting Zion now and in the future, as well as the brief separation he asks them to endure, aim at building new realities that are not so psychologically fragile. "Thus, the community can be consoled about the loss of Baruch and can face the future confidently without him," notes Saylor.⁴⁰ As an authoritative interpreter, Baruch again acts towards his community in the same manner that God has acted towards him. The temporary nature of the removal of Zion at 32:3 parallels the temporary absence of Baruch for the people; the promised resolution of the former is an act of culture-making; of the latter, person-making. The two, of course, dovetail in the figure of Baruch, whose actions heal on individual and communal levels. In fact, when discussing the consequences of the fall of Jerusalem, the fate of the Temple is absent; instead, Baruch consistently focuses on the captivity of the people (cf. 2 Bar. 1:4; 4:1; 5:1; 6:2; 8:4-5; 10:16; 21:21; 80:4; and 85:3).⁴¹ He demonstrates his capacity for true concern and connection with actual living people, as opposed to a morbid fascination with a 'dead' object, and, to reiterate, as "God correct[s] Baruch's attitude, that of his contemporaries is also corrected."⁴² If this attitude is not apparent in the preceding chapters, it is clearly spelled out at 2 Bar. 67:2-4.

The Law

In terms of Baruch's own psychological modulation, the statement that he will be "preserved until the end of times" as a testimony

among the parallels is the death wish engendered by the imminent loss of a parental figure (mother Temple, Baruch the father figure). The recipients of both announcements worry about the justice of such a development and the security of the whole of the Jewish of the people, a concern ameliorated by an indication of its temporary nature.

³⁹ Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 13-14.

⁴⁰ Saylor, "2 Baruch," 492; see also *Promises*, 116-17.

⁴¹ Klijn, "Recent Developments," 9.

⁴² Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 81; an idea also explored by Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 135-38.

(2 Bar. 13:3b) is key. Though this declamation relates to the future, it has an immediate effect in the way in which Baruch begins to go beyond acting as a corrective to his society and attempts to lay the groundwork for a new worldview. This promise accomplishes two feats. First, it alleviates the seer's fear of the Endtimes (and of the now) for he is assured both that there will *be* an end to the traumas unfolding, and he will have a chance to relate his story as a witness to them. "[C]onsolation is possible only when a project is completed," Sayler says of one of God's speeches later in the text (22:2–8).⁴³ Second, it draws his use of fantasy or transitional space away from the more distorted, uncanny, visual symbols that escape the forces of repression (chs. 4, 6, 10, and 11) towards the verbal and rational, where conscious, intentional crafting and societal expectations may dominate. This reversal of the transformation of the seer and the world through wishful hallucinations of Zion represents a departure from the process evinced in Ezekiel and 4 Ezra. Specifically, the progressive aspect of the mourning process draws towards a conclusion that equates wisdom and Law.

Baruch explicitly relates time, wisdom, and the Law relatively early in the text with his answer to God in ch. 14: "Behold, you have shown me the course of times, and that which will happen after these things," he begins (v. 1). He discusses his knowledge of personal and national eschatology (vv. 2–7). But then, in stark contrast to Ezra's disillusionment, Baruch speaks as though he were the *angelus interpres* himself:

O Lord, my Lord, who can understand your judgment? Or who can explore the depth of your way? Or who can discern the majesty of your path? Or who can discern your incomprehensible counsel? Or who of those who are born has ever discovered the beginning and the end of your wisdom? (14:8–9; cf. 4 Ezra 4:5–21, 34–37; Job 38–39)

Baruch, evidently, encounters despair but not doubt. His lamentation over Zion and his oracle against Babylon (2 Bar. 10:6–11:3) are enough to purge the deepest elements of his grief and rage, which emerge concurrently with or just after the worst of the trauma. Immediately $\Upsilon\eta\omega\eta$ provides him with a reason to have hope for himself and his people; God also demonstrates that he protects his Temple and has controlled the events inflicted upon it by temporarily sealing the sacred objects in the earth, having his host set fire to the sanctuary,

⁴³ Sayler, "2 Baruch," 489.

and only then allowing the enemy to seize it. Given what Baruch has seen, and the time frame in which he has seen it, the traditional explanations of loss and suffering surface again, compelling once more. For Baruch, “[A]lways somewhere between the ideas of ‘grief’ and ‘consolation’ the word Law can be found.”⁴⁴ This return to tradition, in a real, living, emotionally vital, and culturally meaningful sense is necessary to recover the Law as the true lost worldview in 2 Baruch. Nickelsburg states the fact in this way:

The author encourages his people to obey the Torah, which the nation has forsaken, in the meantime. Such obedience, taught by leaders whom God will provide, will fill the vacuum left by the desolation of Zion and prepare the souls of God’s people for the joys of the world to come. In this way the manifold crisis felt so acutely by this author and the people for whom and to whom he speaks will be finally resolved.⁴⁵

The central message of this apocalypse is inescapable: one must live according to the Law.⁴⁶ Both God and the seer are constantly advocating the Jewish people’s return to it.

While an appeal to the Law has underscored the piety of the seers we have examined thus far—and even, for that matter, the apocalypses themselves, lest there be any doubt about their orthodoxy on that matter—it is never so obviously the primary focus as it is in 2 Baruch. In fact, one may get the impression that the elevation of traditional Jewish Law in this regard goes against the grain of the novelty of apocalyptic insights, the revealed secrets from heaven. In 2 Baruch, however, the situation is ripe for a rediscovery of the familiar, not in an uncanny way, but in a shock of recognition that the obvious solution to all their problems is the very element that established their relationship with God. Klijn succinctly sums up the role of the Law in 2 Baruch in this context:

The fall of Jerusalem and the devastation of the Temple is not the ultimate problem for our author. These crises created a situation in which Jews in exile lost their religious center. The danger exists that they will be absorbed by the gentiles. Living according to the Law and apocalyptic expectations may help to overcome this situation.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 8.

⁴⁵ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 287.

⁴⁶ Collins, *Imagination*, 177; Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 7.

⁴⁷ Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 10. Anthony Saldarini speaks of the role of Torah in version A of the *Abot R. Nat.* in the same way: “Torah dominates as both the key

While the Jews of Palestine faced the problem of assimilation by the Gentiles to a lesser though not negligible degree, they too have lost their religious center in the course of history. In fact, the fears may be in a very real way more germane to the remaining Jews of Jerusalem, as living without a Temple is a relatively uncharted situation for them. Diasporic Jews had had generations, even centuries, of adaptation to the Temple's physical absence to cushion the blow of its fall.⁴⁸ For this reason, as indicated above, the figure of Baruch in this text seems to act as an inspired interpreter of the Law, one with a devoted following that he guides in proper observance in the absence of traditional Temple practice.⁴⁹ God implies that such a figure is necessary and key to his righteousness in punishing his people. *2 Baruch* 15 continues in God's own voice; the text's discourse on wisdom reaches its theological conclusion.

It is true that man would not have understood my judgment if he had not received the Law and if he were not instructed with understanding. But now, because he trespassed, having understanding, he will be punished because he has understanding. (15:5–6)

In context, the corollary to this declaration is that Baruch acts in this text to give understanding to a people who have not turned away from God's Law, and will not.

to understanding the loss of the Temple and the basis for Judaism after the loss" (Saldarini, "Varieties of Rabbinic Response," 447).

⁴⁸ Even within Palestine, there had been a variety of movements away from standard Temple practice in the period of the Second Temple. The rise of sectarianism, as suggested by some of the New Testament and elaborated (even if inaccurately) by Josephus (*A.J.* 18), betokens this dynamic to a certain degree. See S. Talmon, "The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period," in Miller, Hanson, and McBride, *Ancient Israelite Religion*, 587–616; and George Nickelsburg and Michael Stone, *Faith and Piety in Early Judaism: Texts and Documents* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 11–50. The most prominent example in the scholarship of Jewish sectarianism from this time, of course, is the Qumran colony on the Dead Sea. Murphy compares these sectarians to *2 Bar.*'s efforts to define their faith minus the active cultic center in Jerusalem (e.g., *1QS* 8:4–10). But whereas the Qumran covenanters viewed their own community and its symbolic activities in ritual and scriptural *midrash* as a spiritual replacement for the sacrificial requirements of the Temple, *2 Bar.* "relativizes the Temple altogether and sees the Law as a way to move safely from this transitory world to the eternal world of heaven" (Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 114–15). Still other likely Second Temple-era critiques of the Temple and its cultus can be found at *Mal* 1:6–14; *1 En.* 89:73–74; *Pss. Sol.* 2:1–3; 8:21; and another Qumran text, the Damascus Document, *CD* 4:12–5:9. See Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, 65–73.

⁴⁹ Wright, "Social Setting," 92–93.

Yet the treatment of the Law in 2 Baruch is not merely as an abstract ideal and religio-social construct for this wayward people. It represents a personal symbol for the Baruch figure, an association likely originating with his author's sense of it, as the Law becomes more and more central throughout the rest of the text. Following a night of grieving at the Holy of Holies, Baruch entreats his God,

Your Law is life, and your wisdom is the right way. Now show me the explanation of this vision. For you know that my soul has always been associated with your Law, and that I did not depart from your wisdom from my earliest days. (38:2–4)

Later, the Law becomes a touchstone for numerous admonitions (2 Bar. 41:3; 44:3; 48:22; 48:38; 67:6; 77:16; 85:3). It is worth remembering that, as mentioned above, 2 Baruch very early on identifies wisdom and Law, but the primal mother/womb element is much less a factor than it is in 4 Ezra. The Law in 2 Baruch replaces the Mother as the central complex and overdetermined cultural symbol that structures the latent associations of the text. Both impart a key level of identity to the seer, and most others in the community. But the Law is, at base, a communal ideal that is introjected, while a mother, though also an introjected ideal, lies so much closer to the root of the individual's self images and subjective identity. 2 Baruch aims to re-establish a personal identity with the Law within its community, perhaps thereby creating the very community it imagines must preserve the future for the Jews.

Given his devotion to the Law and his efforts to reintroduce it to the Jewish community, it is no surprise that, like Ezra, Baruch the seer is portrayed in the tradition of a second Moses, one who will lead the Jewish people into a new relationship with God, grounded in the Law.⁵⁰ 4 Ezra's mission, I think, is much more idiosyncratic and personal, aiming to reconnect individuals to a living, still powerful, still meaningful God, some by means of secret knowledge, and some by means of the social authority attained by the group with the secrets. But unlike Ezra, Baruch's law-giving does not contain a secretive or

⁵⁰ Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 129–30; Wright, "Baruch: His Evolution," 272–73. Wright also suggests that Baruch's parallel with Moses in this text may allude not only to his portrayal in the Pentateuch (especially Moses's ascent upon Mt. Nebo before his death to receive knowledge of divine mysteries at Dtr 32:48–52; 34:1–8), but also to the relatively contemporary apocalyptic traditions about Moses still in circulation at this time.

elitist element; *all* of his efforts are for *all* of the people. The various uses of certain Mosaic traditions underscore the fluidity of this particular community's relationship to its past and its efforts to rework it, in the name of the scribal figure Baruch, to create a space in the communal imagination for a divine mandate to return to the Law.

Time

In terms of structuring elements in the narrative, after references to the Law, 2 Baruch offers a recurring concern for the significance and nature of time.⁵¹ Interestingly, although the blame for the calamities that befell Zion lies at the feet of the wicked who did not keep the Law, only the reference at 2 Bar. 15:5 looks backward. Each of the others establishes the Law as a reality and force for the community in the present, with the exception of 48:38, which refers to the future punishments as a result of having forgotten the Law.⁵² This perspective subtly but effectively establishes the this-worldly reality of the present; the traumatic past no longer dominates. The complete, living symbol of the Law guarantees that the present—and therefore the future—are perfectly controlled and meaningful.

It does not guarantee, however, that the present and future will be pleasant and happy. In fact, Baruch suggests that though one may cease mourning for the past, it should be reserved for the future.

How shall we forget those for whom at that time woe is preserved? And why are we again sad for those who die? Or why do we weep for those who go into the realm of death? The lamentations should be kept for the beginning of that coming torment; let the tears be laid down for the coming of that destruction which will then come. (52:2–3)

Note, however, that the angels mourn at this time in the Vision of the Bright and Dark Waters (2 Bar. 67:2). Apparently even the Divine Host, for a time, cannot bear what has happened to Zion.

Sayler also recognizes the element of time in God's concluding remarks just before this declaration, then suggests that "Baruch's approach to God's words emphasizes further his realization that the

⁵¹ Roddy, "Two Parts," 4.

⁵² 2 Bar. 48:38: "[It] will happen in that time that a change of times will reveal itself openly for the eyes of everyone because they polluted themselves in all those times and caused oppression, and each one walked in his own works and did not remember the Law of the Mighty One."

future time offers the best perspective from which to approach the *present time*.⁵³ The periodization of time at 2 Bar. 27:1–14 and 2 Bar. 53 vividly illustrates how history is both determined by God’s control of it and, despite this, is manifested in wickedness and pain as much as in blessedness and victory. But just as important, there will be a time in the future, after the destruction, when all will be restored and recovered, and then mourning will permanently cease (73:1–7).

And then health will descend in dew, and illness will vanish, and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away from among men, and joy will encompass the earth. And nobody will again die untimely, nor will any adversity take place suddenly. (2 Bar. 73:2–3)

This passage explicitly links the return of health and joy, the cessation of fear and lamentation, and the end of ‘untimely’ (i.e., unexpected, unnatural) death or ‘sudden’ adversity. Once again the time element is critical in this Endtime fantasy. It is essentially a plea that in the new, healthy, ‘recovered’ age, the conditions that give rise to painful, traumatic losses will never surface again.

Recovery in the Future

Given how little emphasis has been placed in 2 Baruch on the actual loss in the ‘present,’ the work of mourning as examined above may seem somewhat cursory. What we find in this text, however, is that the temporal focus shifts to the future, and with it, so does the work of fantasy. In fact, if we review the concentration of the fantasy elements in the other texts treated in this study, we may argue that it shifts from the past in Ezekiel (the ‘old’ Temple, which is destroyed) to the present in 4 Ezra (Ezra, even after thirty years, unconvinced about the current state of justice in the world after the destruction of Zion, has a vision that finally resolves those doubts). 2 Baruch’s heightened sense of the importance of time almost invariably addresses the future; the qualities of the New Age, who will survive to be in it, what will preserve the Jewish community through the coming tribulations.

In fact, in the next age the righteous will not even remember the evils of the current world, a condition that F.J. Murphy says “fits in with the author’s purposes in dealing with a mournful attitude towards

⁵³ Saylor, “2 Baruch,” 494; emphasis in original.

what had happened to Zion."⁵⁴ Indeed, the righteous will have no need to dwell on such things, which will be deprived of their melancholic, compulsive powers, and relegated to the true past, the time before the transformation to the New Age. Baruch, more insistently than the other apocalypticans, envisions the future not just as a time of great difficulties to be overcome before an ideal age but one with qualities that will define the Jews who enter into it as the New Israel. 2 Baruch reflects this accentuation of the transformative properties of the future, rather than of the past or present. It contains a great deal of language that bespeaks the glorious transformation of individuals, including the seer himself.⁵⁵

Baruch's psychological transition towards the future commences immediately after the peak of his grief at 2 Bar. 10–11 and a subsequent seven-day fast period. The phrase discussed above, "you will surely be preserved until the end of times to be for a testimony" (13:3b) marks the beginning of the shift. There are also scattered apocalyptic generalizations in the dialogues but in markedly less detail concerning the suffering of the people on earth in the time of the tribulations.⁵⁶ In fact, much of the information as presented seems aimed at comforting the righteous with the promise of their well-being at the Endtimes. For example:

For the righteous justly have good hope for the end and go away from this habitation without fear because they possess with you a store of good works which is preserved in treasuries. (14:12)

And with regard to the righteous ones, those whom you said the world has come on their account, yes, also that which is coming is on their account. For this world is to them a struggle and an effort with much trouble. And that accordingly which will come, a crown with great glory. (15:7–8)

⁵⁴ Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 128.

⁵⁵ The religion espoused by 2 Bar., then, has been called 'covenantal nomism,' based on its emphasis on observing the Law, but Collins cautions this covenant cannot be claimed by all Jews, as in the past, but now only by those who truly accept the Law, including converts but excluding apostates. In addition, the singularity of this covenantal understanding extends beyond the collective as a whole to the salvation of the individual, a salvation out of the troubles of this world and into the peace of the next (Collins, *Imagination*, 177–78).

⁵⁶ 2 Bar. 14:12; 15:7–8; 24:1; 25:1–27:15; 29:3, with reference to the revelation of the messiah and the appearance of the monsters from Creation, Behemoth and Leviathan; 30:5, with reference to resurrection; 32:5.

When horror seizes the inhabitants of earth, and they fall into many tribulations and further, they fall into great torments. And it will happen that they will say in their thoughts because of their great tribulations, 'The Mighty One does not anymore remember the earth.' It will happen when they lose hope, that the time will awake. (25:3–4; cf. Ezek 8:12).

Baruch is portrayed, in general, as more hostile toward the enemies of Israel than Ezra or Ezekiel, possibly reflecting the lack of ambivalence characteristic of the text. The revenge fantasies concerning wicked Jews appear as matter-of-fact as possible, with no relishing of the punishment. This sentiment may be reserved for Gentiles however, as at 2 Bar. 82:2–9, which allows the dissipation of the anger to enact a measure of community building in the process.⁵⁷ Overall we do not see Baruch lingering on the torment of his fellow beings in the worsening conditions on earth. Whereas the fantasies of a seer like Ezra imply that at some level he feels many surely deserve their torture, the analogous ones in 2 Baruch focus on both the suffering and reward of the good. In other words, just as there is no empathic failure between God and Baruch, if they are considered in an analytic relationship, there is an abundance of empathy for the righteous of the earth, from God, from the seer, and from the tacit viewpoint of the author of the text. Early on, then, Baruch already has moved from his narcissism and self-pity outward toward hope and emotional connection with others who have shared or will share his experiences.

The fearful aspects of the future remain vague and without detail, including the rigorously structured and curtly symbolic passage at 2 Bar. 27:1–15:

That time will be divided into twelve parts. . . . In the first part: the beginning of the commotions. In the second part: the slaughtering of the great. In the third part: the fall of many into death. . . .

and so on. This section seems ominous and uncanny; the short descriptions of an obvious demarcation of time signify something left out, knowable but unknown, revealed yet concealed. This disturbing effect still is ameliorated by a similarly structured vision at 2 Bar. 53 of alternating bright and dark waters. The periodization incorporated herein divides all of Judaic history from the fall of Adam to the future restoration of Zion into twelve periods, with evil eras followed by good,

⁵⁷ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 135–36.

then succeeded again by evil. Not only does a lengthy review of history in the guise of divine interpretation (cf. Dan 10–11) effectively dispel any disquietude surrounding this boldly idealized use of time, but by its own indication, Baruch and his contemporaries are in the last dark age, on the verge of the final, eternal age of light.⁵⁸ Thompson notes this smoothing out in 2 Baruch of the tension usually created by apocalyptic determinism.⁵⁹ I have associated the quality of determinism in part with the melancholic view of time and the need for mastery of the past. Its almost complete lack in this text indicates how little the mourning process articulated and enacted in it is hampered by the all-encompassing, compulsive pessimism about the world characteristic of melancholia. Baruch's complaint is not that the Endtimes are coming but that they are not coming soon enough, so eagerly does he await the renewal they will bring.⁶⁰

Baruch's Temple Vision

While the period of the fall of the Temple bears the weight of meaning for the twelve divisions in the Vision of the Waters, it is still but one part of that vision. In Ezekiel and 4 Ezra, visions of and *at* the Temple itself are absolutely key to the movement and meaning of those texts. But for Baruch, the Temple and its restoration is of secondary importance to the revitalization of the Law in people's lives and the establishing of moral fortitude among his followers to survive the transition between the ages.⁶¹ There is even little overt emphasis on the Heavenly Temple, save for a brief mention at 2 Bar. 4:1–6:

Or do you think that this is the city of which I said: *On the palms of my hands I have carved you?* It is not this building that is in your midst now; it is that which will be revealed, with me, that was already prepared from the moment that I decide to create Paradise. (vv. 2–3)⁶²

⁵⁸ See Roddy, "Two Parts," 6–7.

⁵⁹ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 140.

⁶⁰ Thompson, *Responsibility*, 126, 134.

⁶¹ See Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 37–70, 106–107, on the central role of theology of the two ages in all aspects of 2 Bar.'s message.

⁶² Cf. Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 72–73, as well as below, for a comparison of the apocalyptic Baruch figures on their anticipation of the Heavenly Temple.

The ruined Temple represents an important symbolic space for the visionary, one to which he returns in a very significant way at a crucial point in the text.

If 2 Baruch has a parallel to Ezekiel's experience of the loss of his wife tied to the loss of the Temple, or to Ezra's transformative Weeping Woman sequence, it is at chs. 31–40. But this event is not a solitary experience; from the beginning it involves the society of Elders, representatives of the community. It commences with a forthright indication of the future of the Temple, with Baruch acting as intermediary between God and the people.

For after a short time, the building of Zion will be shaken in order that it will be rebuilt. That building will not remain; but it will again be uprooted after some time and will remain desolate for a time. And after that it is necessary that it will be renewed in glory and that it will be perfected into eternity. (32:1–5)

The differences between this passage and that of 4 Ezra are obvious: it is not visual; it eschews symbolism for emotional frankness; it does not evoke the architectural sense of the uncanny by somehow hinting that either the present or future building is both here and not here, real and not real. It does paint the current edifice as impermanent, but only for a limited time, which does render it cosmically liminal. Moreover, unlike the other seers considered in this study, Baruch counters the idea that the fall of the Temple represents a qualitative fissure in history.⁶³

Still the speech aims to offer information useful for the society. It allows the people to live in the present but gird themselves for future. For the Temple will be renewed, this time “perfected into eternity,” but they “should not, therefore, be so sad regarding the evil which has come now, but much more [distressed] regarding that which is in the future” (2 Bar. 32:5). In an interesting way this passage's reference to sorrow turns the Vision of the Weeping Woman on its head. Ezra's vision, preoccupied at first with the sad circumstances of the present, by its end has importuned a cessation of pity because the future glory of Zion has been revealed. The Baruch ‘revelation’ seems to dismiss the events of the present as essentially ‘not that bad,’ at least not in comparison with what is to come. This juxtaposition is possibly another illustration of the management of cognitive dissonance

⁶³ Klijn, “Recent Developments,” 11.

in apocalypse, as disappointment is mitigated by its comparison to something expected in the future. Only after enduring the impending tribulation and the complete passing of this world will the Temple be recovered and creation be "renewed" (32:6).⁶⁴

After addressing the community on the subject of his absence, Baruch is granted a vision. Like Ezra, the experience is set up by lament and prayer. One last time, Baruch returns to the Holy of Holies to "get some further understanding" (34:1) and, weeping, asks:

O that my eyes were springs, and my eyelids, that they were a fountain of tears. For how shall I be sad over Zion, and lament for Jerusalem? For at the place where now I am prostrate, the high priests used to offer holy sacrifices, and placed thereon incense of fragrant spices. Now, however, that of which we are proud has become dust, and that which our soul desired is ashes. (2 Bar. 35:2–5; cf. Lam 1)

Baruch has commenced healing in his community, but now that he has separated from the others, the stage is set for his own breakthrough.

Just as when Ezekiel confronts the dual losses of his wife and the Temple, the tone of the book becomes hopeful in anticipation of restoration; and when Ezra most directly re-experiences his grief concerning the Temple, he is granted his first cohesive vision of the future; so too does Baruch the seer return to the heart of his loss now to gain insight into the recovery of the Jewish people in the future (chs. 36–40). Like Ezra's Eagle Vision at 4 Ezra 11–12, Baruch's contains a Danielic four-kingdom allusion, describing the horrors of the fourth kingdom "which once destroyed Zion" as the final kingdom before the Messianic age, though here only in the interpretation (2 Bar. 39:3–5, 7b; 40:1b).⁶⁵ The importance of the vision overall is underscored by its explicit association of the destruction of Zion, on the one hand, and the subsequent destruction of the culpable human kingdom, on the other, as well as three others after it, the last one being Rome, actual destroyer of the Temple. Hence the use of historical, traditional, and current political elements shape this vision in much the same way as they

⁶⁴ See Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 87–89 on 2 Bar.'s relationship with other notions of the Heavenly Jerusalem or Temple. Murphy, I believe, draws a line too heavily between a divine vision of a future Temple, which will secure a place on earth, and the determination that such a structure exists already in Heaven.

⁶⁵ The sylvan imagery employed here may also be an allusion to Ezek 17:3–9, another veiled screed against world empires. Sayler relates it thematically to the implied threat that resulted from God's awakened anger following Baruch's first lament (12:1–4; Sayler, *Promises*, 24).

did Ezra's. It creates a reality and an understanding of that reality at the same time, implying that the equation of Babylon and Rome exists in the divine plan. The Jewish community's problems with Rome are temporary, as well. The narrative reaffirms that the indisputable wickedness of that empire will finally bring about the messianic age.

In a scene that could be called a 'remembering, repeating, and working-through' of 2 *Bar.* 31–43, in ch. 44 Baruch returns to the people as he said he would to discuss Zion's status. Those who preserve the Law will "participate in the consolation of Zion," he tells them, while immediately repeating the reminder from the first encounter that the work has only just begun: "For that which is now is nothing. But that which is in the future will be very great" (2 *Bar.* 44:7b–8). But though he elaborates on the beauty of the time afterwards (44:9–15), his son and the Elders still are paralyzed by the thought of his absence (46:1–3), which is more certain this time, though they do not know it (46:7). He leaves and prays a prayer nearly six times longer than the one at ch. 35. God responds with an elaborate description of the coming times that, like Dan 12, indicates that resurrection and judgment are on the docket for the Endtimes (50:2–4) and that the righteous and wise will undergo a glorious transformation.⁶⁶

As with Dan 12:2–3 and Ezek 37, part of the culmination of these revenge and utopian fantasies of the future includes a very idealized notion of the recovery of the body from death. Once again, bodily restoration in resurrection reflects the ultimate fantasized wish-fulfillment of overcoming loss: to recover a body from death itself; or, on a larger scale, to restore a decimated people to communal health. As if to state the emotional undercurrent explicitly, 2 *Bar.* 43–44 addresses the consolation of both Baruch the seer and of Zion in idealized or eschatological contexts. "For that which is now is nothing. But that which is in the future will be very great. For everything will pass away which is

⁶⁶ Dan 12:2–3: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken, some to eternal life and some to shame and eternal disgrace. The wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who bring many to righteousness like the stars, forever and ever."

2 *Bar.* 51:3, 10: "Also, as for the glory of those who proved to be righteous on account of my law, those who possessed intelligence in their life, and those who planted the root of wisdom in their heart—their splendor will then be glorified by transformations and the shape of their face will be changed into the light of their beauty so that they may acquire and receive the undying world which is promised to them.... For they will live in the heights of that world and they will be like the angels and be equal to the stars."

corruptible, and everything that dies will go away." (2 Bar. 44:9). Here again nihilism is transformed into cosmic hope, promising to overcome the threat of death. Baruch will understand his revelations as a result of many "consolations which will last forever" (43:1–2), while in the future, "the time again will take a turn for the better" for those who persevere in the Law, and they will participate in the consolation of Zion (44:7).⁶⁷

Following this discourse, Baruch experiences a long vision and interpretation (2 Bar. 53–76), the last of their kind in the text. The vision itself, contained in ch. 53, and discussed earlier in relation to 2 Baruch's use of time, is an exemplar of symbolic economy. It depicts a cloud pouring water that is alternately dark and light twelve times in succession, with the dark always more than the light, until the dark waters, mingled with fire, bring with them "desolation and destruction" (53:7). Finally, lightning makes the twelve rivers flowing from the sea subject to it.

As it happens, the vision is simply a springboard for a long historical review, one that commemorates Israel's history as periods of great wickedness mitigated by periods of righteousness, starting with Adam's transgression.⁶⁸ The 'present' destruction of Zion is represented by the eleventh black waters (ch. 67). Strikingly, the text again raises issue of mourning, but attributes it to the angels (67:2: "Do you think that there is no mourning among the angels before the Mighty One, that Zion is delivered up in this way?"). The next bright waters, the twelfth waters in the vision, symbolize Zion's restoration after the Exile; they are followed by the blackest waters of all (the ones mixed with fire in the vision)—encompassing the time of the Roman empire, the author's present, and the coming tribulations. More bright waters, the time of the lightning in the vision, follow this evil time. It is the final expression of the dream of a heavenly utopia that restores the lost security of the old Judaic worldview in ideal terms. The healing

⁶⁷ Thompson includes the verses in 2 Bar. 43 among those assuring Baruch of his future reward, all of which involve escaping death in some way, such as translation to the heavens or being 'preserved' until the end (*Responsibility*, 133). Murphy illustrates the intrinsic relationship of the eternal consolations of 2 Bar. 44 to the statements immediately afterwards concerning the passing, entirely, of this world and this time into the next (Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 106–107).

⁶⁸ Cf. the similar structuring of the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93 and 91) or even the periodization of history in Isa 65 (Collins, *Imagination*, 51; Roddy, "Two Parts," 6).

issue, in fact, even emerges at the manifest level of the text, as noted above, and envisions the end of sudden, traumatic death itself.

And then health will descend in dew, and illness will vanish, and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away from among men, and joy will encompass the earth. And nobody will again die untimely, nor will any adversity take place suddenly. (73:2–3)

With its concise, highly structured vision and an interpretation that integrates all of Israel's experiences in history, including ones in the 'darkest' future (which is to say, those in the author's present), this long unit renders Baruch's stance into a single, powerfully symbolic worldview.

The dualism of light and dark times or cosmic portions obtains elsewhere in the apocalyptic literature, most notably in the Qumran community, particularly the War Scroll (1QM).⁶⁹ Whereas early on in the mourning process this kind of idealized splitting into *all good* and *all bad* indicates a defensive psychological compartmentalization that protects the inner-most self, this regimentation of the twelve periods, imposed on a received and promulgated history, suggests a re-ordering of external, shared reality. The new order, as imagined, conveys certain theological expectations to others in images and concepts they can immediately grasp and accept as valid: traditional symbols, cultural tropes, or even mythological archetypes. In other words, the sources of content in the transitional space opened up by the author of 2 Baruch are mainly located in the external world of shared culture rather than the idiosyncratic inner world of personal psychology. To affect readers, they must be led to reinvest in the permanent presence of God instead of contingent, earthly buildings.

The author of [2 Baruch] wanted to direct the attention of Israel away from the destruction of the Temple and Zion as a cause for mourning

⁶⁹ Not only does Qumran's Community Rule (1QS) view the cosmological conflict at hand as one between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness (which represents an anthropological dualism as well), but in 1QM the eschatological battle is divided into victory for the Sons of Light for three parts, then the Sons of Darkness for the next three parts, with final triumph slated for God in the seventh part. Dualism may also be found, to some degree, in the Enoch literature, as well as in a very metaphorical way in Amos' description of the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18), but for the most part it is absent from Biblical thought. Its appearance at Qumran and in the Enochian tours of heaven is believed to be a Persian/Zoroastrian influence (Collins, *Imagination*, 126–128; see also Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* [New York: Routledge, 1997], 41–51).

towards the real place of God's presence, heaven. He was writing a kind of revisionist theology—one which reassessed the place of the city of Jerusalem and its Temple in Judaism.⁷⁰

This revision reflects the 'new structures of appreciation' underpinning the author's reestablished Jewish worldview, and in so doing it recasts its sacred geography into a realm free of the volatility of life on earth, the eternally secure refuge of heaven. Jewish society as it has been reconstituted offers a strong prospect of collective transformation both from without, by God, and from within, through the revitalized hope in the future, trust in the Law, and solidarity as a righteous people.

The Epistle of Baruch

There is something of a dual ending to 2 Baruch. 2 Baruch 76 resolves Baruch's communication with God, acknowledging that the seer will be preserved until the end of times in forty days, but in the meantime he is to "instruct the people as much as [he] can so that they may learn lest they die in the last times, but may learn so that they live in the last times" (76:5). But in ch. 77, when Baruch arrives in front of the people, he is presented with a request to write a letter to the Exiles in Babylon to strengthen them as well before he leaves; he magnifies their wish by adding the scattered 'nine and a half tribes' to the letter's recipients. So 2 Baruch presents an individual resolution, then a communal one—but the community is not concerned with themselves, but with the Jews in other lands.

In this letter (2 Bar. 78:1–87:1), Baruch aims to console the Jewish people at large. Concerning the destruction of the Temple and the captivity of the citizens of Jerusalem, he writes:

That is the affliction about which I write to you. For truly I know that the inhabitants of Zion were a comfort to you. As long as you knew that they were happy, this was more important than the affliction you endured being separated from them.

But also hear the word of consolation. For I mourned with regard to Zion and asked grace from the Most High and said, "Will these things exist for us until the end? And will these evils befall us always?" And the Mighty One did according to the multitude of his grace, and the Most High according to the magnitude of his mercy, and he revealed to me a word that I might be comforted, and showed me visions that I might not

⁷⁰ Murphy, *Structure and Meaning*, 114.

be again sorrowful, and made known to me the mysteries of the times, and showed me the coming of the periods.

My brothers, therefore I have written to you that you may find consolation with regard to the multitude of tribulations. (80:6–82:1)

In addressing a letter to the Diaspora communities, Baruch takes an incontrovertible step towards making his private experience communal. In fact, we might note the symbolism of the final lines of the scripture, as the seer ties the letter to the dispersed tribes to the neck of an eagle and lets it go.⁷¹ He has transformed his personal grief into a cultural artifact, molded on the contours of his passage from mourning to consolation and fitted to the immediate and anticipated needs of the Jewish people in the near future. It is no longer a series of fantasies or creations within transitional realities, but a plan that advocates engaging the painful trials of existence via a wholehearted return to tradition and obeisance to the Law (cf. 84:1–11). As he releases the bird, so too does he permanently release the pains of history with which this text is concerned. Reversing the scenes of the apocalyptic visionary being transformed by what he takes in—Ezekiel's scroll, Ezra's inspiration-inducing drink—Baruch effects transformation in others by what he sends out.

3 Baruch: Mourning the End, or the End of Mourning?

It is somewhat ironic that 2 Baruch ends with the seer, at the insistence of his community, reaching out with consoling words to Jews outside of Palestine. Another apocalypse bearing the name of the post-Exilic scribe, of about the same time period as 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, is known as 3 Baruch. This text, however, is a Diasporic work that flatly rejects the continued hope and lamentation for the earthly Temple.⁷² It too begins at the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusa-

⁷¹ This letter is the one to the nine and a half tribes, not a presumably identical one for the Exiles in Babylon, that is sent by three men. Baruch communicates the variety of traditional symbolism embodied by the bird in 2 Bar. 77:23–25, as he relates instances when Noah, Elijah, and Solomon used birds to do their bidding. To whom this letter is actually addressed is unclear, as the author of 2 Bar. is probably not reaching out the mixed-ethnicity descendants of the Northern Kingdom tribes, the Samaritans, so loathed by the Jews of Judea in the first century C.E.

⁷² Two versions of 3 Bar. are extant, one in Greek and one in Slavonic; general opinion holds it to be an Egyptian text, originally written in Greek. A variant developed independently, which is only preserved in the Slavonic translation; cf. H.E. Gay-

lem, at almost the same place in the story as 2 Baruch. But rather than experiencing a series of persuasive revelations operating at a number of different levels, leading him through a process of consolation, this text curtails Baruch's state of dismay immediately and decisively.

Worldview and Social Matrix of 3 Baruch

The sack of Jerusalem must have been regarded very differently for those whose only actual contact with the city, possibly, involved participating in annual festivals.⁷³ The Temple, while still an important and powerful religious symbol, naturally lacked the same conspicuous physical presence in the Diaspora that Jerusalem once gloried in. As such, following its fall its meaning as a symbol in the literature of

lord, introduction to "3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch," in Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic*, 654–55. As it is richer and in general more detailed, the extant Greek will be considered the primary version for the purposes of the study; significant additions or difference in the Slavonic will be noted as necessary. Picard views the work as the product of Jewish mystics in Egypt, but Harlow finds the evidence for such a determination very specious (Picard, "Observations," 90–91; also Picard, "Trajets du corps, trajets célestes: Éléments d'une cosmologie mystique juive," in *Moïse Géographie: Recherches sur les représentations juives et chrétiennes de l'espace* (Études de Psychologie et de Philosophie 24; ed. A. Desreumaux and F. Schmidt; Paris: Vrin, 1988), 45–48; Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 14–16). The more contentious question is whether there is Christian interpolation, especially between chs. 11–16, which has even led to speculation that 3 Bar. is actually a Christian text (for instance, Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 87). This position is in the minority; what is interesting, though, is that Christian and Jewish stances towards the Temple in Jerusalem, at this time and place, could be virtually identical (see Gaylord, "Introduction," 655–57). Also, Richard Bauckham perceives more Christian reworking on the Greek version than the Slavonic, thus giving the nod to the latter as closer to the original (Bauckham, "Early Jewish Visions of Hell," *JTS* 41 [1990]: 372). Harlow covers the history of the argument thoroughly in *Greek Apocalypse*. The affiliation between Jewish and Christian attitudes on this issue is reinforced by the similar interconnection of lament and vision of the Book of Revelation—a work probably from about the same time period, written far from Palestine, which, though it features a glimpse of the Heavenly Temple, does not mention the fall of the earthly one. It is worth noting here that Christianity, too, was a cultural form created out of loss and idealized expectations for the future, and hence was subject to its own repeated failures to recover the promises of its earliest worldview.

⁷³ Martin Goodman asserts that many Diasporic Jews were just as horrified as the Second Temple's fall as their Palestinian counterparts, specifically because of its effect on their religious customs (Goodman, "Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135* [ed. James Dunn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992], 27–37). On the Diasporic participation in Temple activities, see Margaret H. Williams, ed., *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 67–70. It is noted that Jews in the Diaspora continued to make the pilgrimage even after the events of 70, and still later, after the Bar Kokhba revolt and the subsequent ban on Jewish access to Jerusalem.

the outlying communities was as in much flux if not more so.⁷⁴ The polemic of 3 Baruch, like 2 Baruch, suggests a disagreement among the Jews regarding the proper amount of mourning for the fallen Temple. However, 3 Baruch seems to represent a position advocating that *no displays of mourning whatsoever* are necessary for the Jews at this point in history. It advocates no hope for future restoration; it depicts no fantasies of revenge of the righteous upon the wicked, not even the wicked nations that inflicted these pains upon God's people. 3 Baruch suggests not that such desires are impossible to be fulfilled in the cosmic scheme of history but rather that they foolishly direct one's attention away from the true workings of the world, and the moral understanding that pleases God far beyond any concern over a physical structure that has long since lost its significance.⁷⁵

3 Baruch in some ways seems immediately more traditional in its outlook than the other Zion Apocalypses of this era. The worldview is staunchly and solidly Yahwist: God is in control, the cosmos operates perfectly well within his purview. On the other hand, its outright rejection of the Temple and Jerusalem—and even the hope for their restoration—is something unexpected in this type of text. What dominates with respect to this central aspect of the belief system in 3 Baruch is a universalism that would acquit itself well in the multi-cultural envi-

⁷⁴ Philo of Alexandria continued to revere the sanctity of the Temple and defend it against its attackers prior to its fall; but Collins suggests that for Philo, the Temple and other external demonstrations of the Jews' relationship with God are better understood as "symbols of a deeper spiritual concern which is the real focus of attention" (John Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem* [New York: Crossroad, 1983], 113; on Philo's regard for the sanctity of the Temple see *Migr.* 92). The Temple's status is much more open to question in the Jewish Sibylline Oracles. In the Third Sibyl, the earthly Temple ultimately becomes a site of utopian focus for all the nations; but the Fifth Sibyl, while bewailing the destruction of the Temple and recalling more honorable times, also envisions a new temple for sacrifice in Egypt, though it too will be destroyed. Finally, while the Fourth Sibylline Oracle alludes to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, uniquely among Diasporic literature it rejects temple worship outright (Collins, *Between*, 149, 151–52). In addition, some of the varieties of Rabbinic reactions that might underlie 2 *Bar.*, such as those of Johanan ben Zakkai and his cadre, are discussed above; see also Saldarini, "Varieties of Rabbinic Response," 437–58, which examines R. Johanan's role as an appropriate mourner in a number of versions of the *Avot de Rabbi Natan*. So while we certainly do not have a unified picture of the general esteem with which Jerusalem's Temple was held in the greater Jewish world, we do have indications that its meaning, both as a physical site for sacrificial practice and as a symbol of Jewish identity, was subject to change in the various Jewish communities of the time (cf. Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 72–74).

⁷⁵ Picard, "Observations," 101–2; 3 *Bar.* 13–16.

ronment of the Diaspora, with the strong Yahwist outlook integrated into it as well. Collins notes that the actual conduct required by the apocalypse could have been "acceptable even to enlightened gentiles."⁷⁶ One wonders if this very aim does not underlie its renunciation of even such sociological markers as polemic against 'the nations' or 'the wicked' who are responsible for what happened to Jerusalem and the Jews.

It is noteworthy that the tour of heaven that is the main feature of the text itself ends, and the vision breaks off, when it reveals that some angels were not able to bring back any virtues from some evil "demons and men" (3 Bar. 13:1). These sinners are defined by their diverse acts of disobedience and thus not by anything that would allow them to be identified as a group; they are sinners who would be considered so by almost anyone, Jew or Gentile alike. For the first time since the beginning of the apocalypse, Baruch betrays some emotion here. Composed and respectful, he implores, "Permit me, Lord, to cry on their behalf" (Slavonic, 16:7). The archangel Michael replies that he may cry; perhaps the Lord will hear him and have mercy. Then, suddenly, Baruch returns to earth (ch. 17). The message seems clear: lamentation must stop for the Temple, which no longer exists, and be directed at sin and evil-doers upon the earth, which do. This is the key revelation for the earth at this time.

Loss in the Present

Like the other Zion Apocalypses, in 3 Baruch the seer attests to grief in the course of the events of the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, or their aftermath.⁷⁷ While seated by the former location of the Holy of Holies (cf. 2 Bar. 34:1), he is "weeping in [his] mind" and lamenting that God has given his people and city over to Nebuchadnezzar (1:1-2)—by now, a familiar scene. In due course, an angel (who is

⁷⁶ Collins, *Between*, 235.

⁷⁷ The introduction in the Greek version, in fact, strongly recalls Ezek 1:1-2, with a reference to the contemporary captivity of a king and the detail of the seer being beside a river. However, the king involved here, 'Abimelek,' who is held captive by 'Agrippa,' are not connected to the Biblical Exile. No date is set by this reference, either.

not God, as in 2 Baruch, but an angel named Phamael⁷⁸) arrives, God having heard Baruch's prayer, and tells him,

[D]o not concern yourself so much over the salvation of Jerusalem. For thus says the Lord God Almighty, and he sent me before you in order that I should proclaim and disclose to you all things of God. (3 Bar. 1:3-5).

Rather than the long, emotionally involved discourses on the state of the world and the future of the people, however, in this case Baruch immediately accedes to the request:

And when he told me these things, I became calm, and the angel said to me, "Cease irritating God, and I will disclose to you other mysteries greater than these."

To which Baruch replies,

As the Lord lives, if you disclose a word to me and I hear it from you, I shall speak no further. May God add to me punishment on the Day of Judgment if I speak in the future. (1:6-7)

Like Ezekiel, upon his call Baruch is rendered speechless. (Like Ezekiel also, in the presence of a divine being later, he is anything but taciturn.) But unlike Ezekiel, his ostensible silence is a voluntary act. In fact, while Ezekiel's will is suppressed *to become the instrument* of revelation to others, Baruch's silence comes *in anticipation of receiving* revelation himself.

The contrast between the first case investigated by this study, Ezekiel, who is himself almost obliterated psychologically by the events surrounding the fall of the First Temple, and Baruch, who openly dismisses their importance, could not be more striking. The goal of mourning is to sever the attachment to the lost object, and the interchange between Baruch and the angel here certainly achieves just that. Collins states the matter succinctly: "3 Baruch, then, resolves the problem of the destruction of Jerusalem by virtually breaking its connection with Jerusalem."⁷⁹ So, too, notes Harlow:

⁷⁸ Phanael (or, variably, Phanuel) in the Slavonic. See Gaylord's note on 3 Bar. 2:5 in "Introduction," 657-658. This angel also appears in the Enoch literature, strengthening the case that 3 Bar. is related or responding to that apocalyptic tradition.

⁷⁹ Collins, *Between*, 235.

The finality of the earthly Temple's demise and the end of its symbolic centrality are underscored in his aborted ascent. The seer is denied access to the heavenly temple in a way that seems purposely designed to underscore the dispensability of the earthly Temple.⁸⁰

In this regard, he describes 3 Baruch as a "*polemical stance against tendencies in the Jewish apocalyptic tradition that attached undue symbolic importance to the Temple.*"⁸¹ Therefore for the purposes of this study this text represents a final stage in the mourning process. The deep attachment to the Temple has been broken by the opening scene; no melancholic pining for or re-imagining of the lost Zion on earth follows. The message is clear to Baruch, as well as to the reader: the Temple is done; seek God's presence elsewhere.

The Work of Mourning

If the seer dissociates himself from Zion at the commencement of the text, what more can it tell us about the work of mourning in it? The seer does not engage in dialogue with or lament in the company of the *angelus interpres*. Moreover, even the key healing motif of the idealization of the Zionistic structures or the Jewish people is absent. Still 3 Baruch is structured by one conspicuous aspect: the movement of the seer through a succession of five celestial spaces or heavens.

The succession of heavens should be viewed in light of Homans' 'new structures of appreciation' in fantasy as described in Chapter One and seen previously as Ezekiel's and Ezra's respective Heavenly Cities. (2 Baruch's 'new structure,' the Law, is actually an 'old structure,' newly appreciated.) A good deal about the tour of heaven in 3 Baruch evokes both Ezekiel's Vision of the Abominations in the Temple (Ezek 8) and the Vision of the New City (Ezek 40–48). The phrase 'greater mysteries' at 3 Bar. 1:6 and 2:6 recalls Ezek 8:6, 13, and 15, where, after each site of idolatry on the tour, God declares that Ezekiel would "see still greater abominations than these." As with the Abominations, the vision and thus the fantasy production itself is structured by *movement* from one location to the next (each time preceded by the 'greater' promise). On the other hand, as with the New City, the fantasy is not

⁸⁰ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 58.

⁸¹ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 74; emphasis in original; cf. 71–73.

emotional and extreme, but matter of fact and concerned with exacting detail and explanation.

Notably, the final stop on Baruch's tour, though abbreviated, is at the Heavenly Temple itself. In the same way that determined or divided time structures the experience of the visionary in the preceding texts, the divided space of the cosmos does so here. Moreover, the tour's content is devoted almost entirely to the material realia of the heavens and the mechanics of the cosmic structure (3 *Bar.* 2:2, 4–5; 3:2; 4:1–5; Slavonic 5:1–3), although in some of the lower heavens the seer finds those responsible for revolting against God in primordial times (the Tower of Babel, ch. 3; the vine that caused Adam's downfall, ch. 4).⁸² This combination of structure and content in the heavenly journey creates what Jean-Claude Picard calls a '*système du monde*,' an alternative but completely viable worldview, but one available only to the text's readers.⁸³ Both the play and the work of fantasy, represented separately in the other apocalypses, occur simultaneously in the act of worldview creation at the core of 3 Baruch.

That this worldview is created for—and in a sense, by—the readers of the apocalypse is an important point for Picard, as it has been in this study for the other texts, as well. In fact, he sees the journey of Baruch the seer and the readers' empathic, vicarious identification with him in this undertaking as akin to an initiation ritual. One moves from a state of ignorance and error in understanding to one of wisdom and comprehension. In the case of 3 Baruch, the mysteries are the

⁸² The disappearance of the temporal aspect of the apocalypse is, of course, quite surprising given the general importance of the Endtime in these texts. Other heavenly tour apocalypses, such as 1 *En.*, to which 3 *Bar.* is often compared, may downplay the anticipation of the End in temporal terms, but they tend to represent the culmination of eschatological events as being located in the heavens (e.g., the places of final reward and punishment, and God's place of judgment at the Endtimes at 1 *En.* 25, 27; cf. God's announcement of the End at 10:2; see Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 64–71). Bauckham suggests that the sinners in the first and second heavens are substitutes for the Enochian Watchers ("Visions of Hell," 372). Had a definite eschaton been of importance, it most assuredly would have been introduced to the seer in the cosmic scheme. Picard ("Observations," 83 n. 2) suggests that, based on 3 *Bar.*'s final scene, the End will come when angels completely fill Michael's vessel, which is as deep as the distance from heaven to earth and as wide as from north to south, with the flowers of the virtues of the righteous (11:8). This reading, while fascinating, is completely unsupported by the text. However it is true, as Picard argues elsewhere, that the fall of Zion and hence the end of *its* time is related to the fall of humanity in general, as represented in the first and second heavens, chs. 3–4 (Picard, "Observations," 95–100).

⁸³ Picard, "Observations," 95; cf. Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 58; and J.Z. Smith's reference to the New City of Ezek 40–48 as a 'total system' in *To Take Place*, 70.

central ones that concern each of these texts: Why did the Temple fall? What does it mean for the Jewish people? Furthermore, Picard relates the experience of the seer not only to initiation rituals but to shamanic cures, as well. From this analogy he derives his conceptualization of 'the apocalyptic cure.'⁸⁴

Despite no manifest appearances of healing and recovery in 3 Baruch, the unconscious processes of integration and transformation are very much at work. The heavenly journey, argues Picard, is inherently therapeutic, as is the re-experiencing of the traumatic event in 3 Bar. 1, which he relates to *abreaction*, the psychoanalytic re-experiencing of old issues in the present.⁸⁵ That is, the text allows readers to identify with Baruch so as to express a deleterious conflict that threatens to destroy them just as much as the fall of the Temple itself did. In undergoing the cosmic journey they resolve the catastrophic split between heaven and earth and between past and future that motivated all of the apocalyptic concerns of the previous texts examined here.⁸⁶ The situation encountered by the seer and the symbols with which he interacts are not meant to be clear and didactic but instead create a true *système du monde* that integrates the present condition with a modulation of the past eschatological expectations of recovering the glory of Zion on earth.⁸⁷

In Picard's view, the text's symbols both work at the literary level to unify the narrative internally and involve the readers in the experience created therein: "[L]es visions déclinent leur signification et agissent sur celui qui les contemple, ou mieux: sur celui qui s'y contemple."⁸⁸ If the other texts examined in this study loosely followed a sequence from loss to rage and despair, to acceptance through the work of mourning, to recovery, idealization, and worldview building, 3 Baruch essentially begins at the point of acceptance and the work of mourning and, through the participation of its readers, immediately

⁸⁴ Picard, "Observations," 90.

⁸⁵ Picard, "Observations," 88. Picard also describes the *angelus interpres* in 3 Bar. as an 'adjuvant'—i.e., a pharmaceutical accelerator or catalyst. This description underscores the degree to which the angel here represents the final position in the seer's (and readers') spiritual journey, as opposed to the conflictive and ambivalent relationship between seer and guide typical in the other Zion Apocalypses (Picard, "Observations," 92).

⁸⁶ Picard, "Observations," 102.

⁸⁷ Cf. Collins, *Between*, 235.

⁸⁸ Picard, "Observations," 94.

commences the process of recovery of a worldview and the reconstruction of reality.⁸⁹

Ironically, the closest scholarly affirmation of the thesis of this study appears in conjunction with the least emotional and therefore 'least psychoanalytic' text of the four. From one perspective, the 'path to consolation' in 3 Baruch is so short and stylized as to be virtually non-existent. A psychological analysis for 3 Baruch *prima facie* finds little material in the content of the tour with which to work, which pointedly dismisses the importance of the loss of the Temple. The personality of the seer is fundamentally obscured by the actions and conduct of the divine personages, as well. Harlow opines,

Indeed, the recovery of Baruch ensues so remarkably and so swiftly that one can hardly even speak of a 'struggle.' One may, therefore, suspect that the seer's emotional state represents a strictly literary device designed to get the tour underway.⁹⁰

Following Picard, Harlow is correct to recognize the role of the seer's brief pain in initiating the heavenly journey itself. But one may surmise that if there were a struggle with his faith in the wake of the disaster in Jerusalem, as represented in Ezekiel, 4 Ezra, and even 2 Baruch to a degree, in this text that conflict is resolved beforehand.⁹¹ The melancholic paralysis that befalls these other seers is not evidenced in 3 Baruch. In a sense it depicts pure mourning. The journey through the heavens is basically unimpeded—until its stunning conclusion, that is. The heavenly tour's abrupt termination, as it happens, may in fact related to the end of the tradition of mourning for Zion in these apocalyptic texts.

Cosmic Recovery and the End of Mourning

Baruch's journey ends at the fifth heaven, in which he observes activities of Michael and other angelic functionaries collecting the virtues

⁸⁹ Sayler relates consolation in 3 *Bar.* to its ability to give its readers final, definitive certainty in God's control of the cosmos (Sayler, *Promises*, 114–15).

⁹⁰ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 21.

⁹¹ Picard views the specific situation of Jewish shame and vulnerability among the nations of the Diaspora as contributing to an "acute conscience of the Exile" among those who wrote, read, and redacted texts such as this one (Picard, "Observations," 102–3).

of the righteous on Earth (3 *Bar.* 11–17). In other heavenly ascent apocalypses, such as the Enoch literature and the Ascension of Isaiah, a direct encounter with God in the throne room is the center point or apex of the journey, which raises a reader's expectations for Baruch, if one is familiar with that tradition. At first, Baruch and Phamael wait outside until Michael opens the gate for them, but then the angel does indeed promise that Baruch will see what seems to be the greatest mystery of them all: "[W]ait and you will see the glory of God" (11:2). Thus it is surprising, even unsettling, to a reader bringing these expectations to the text to find that none of this transpires.⁹² In the Greek version, Baruch almost literally has the doors of heaven closed in his face while Michael is speaking, and he is suddenly returned to earth. He praises God for deeming him "worthy of such honors" and exhorts those who "happen upon these revelations" to glorify God (17:3–4). In the Slavonic, Baruch implores the angel that he may cry for the sinners, and he is given permission to do so, in order that God may hear him and have mercy. But then a voice commands that Baruch be brought down to earth to tell humanity what he has seen (16:7–17:1).

As the manuscript traditions developed independently after separating, I will not argue that one ending reacts to or develops the other.⁹³

⁹² "With little exaggeration, the ending can be said to frustrate the very expectation that the narrative itself has generated" (Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 55). Harlow thoroughly reviews the problem of the integrity of the ending in *Greek Apocalypse* (34–76). At issue is whether heavens have been 'lost' in 3 *Bar.*, either by textual recension or by a fresh alteration of the motif of ascent through multiple heavens. Often in ascent texts, the seer travels to seven heavens to reach the throne room of God. In fact, Origen mentions seven worlds or heavens in a reference to "the book of the prophet Baruch" in his *First Principles* (c. 220–230 C.E.); however, Origen appears to have in mind another Baruch text, or a concept other than heavens (such as planets), or even only faulty second-hand knowledge of 3 *Bar.* (Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 36–38). Harlow supports the integrity of the five-heaven schema as it stands; however, he believes that Michael has access to other heavens deliberately not shown to the human seer (or the human audience). That is, he believes 3 *Bar.* assumes seven heavens, but its depiction of only five fulfills certain literary and theological goals. On the other hand, Picard surmises from the description of the size of Michael's vessel in the Heavenly Temple, which reaches from "heaven to earth," that there is in fact, then, no further distance to go between the two. (He confirms this observation by citing 3 *Bar.* 2:5, referring to the size of the door in the first heaven, which is as "great as the distance from earth to heaven" [Picard, "Observations," 94 n. 2].) The issue need not be resolved for the purposes of this study, although it is interesting to consider the role of the unconscious *censor* if, indeed, two heavens worth of revelation—including the actual personal encounter of the seer with YHWH—have been suppressed.

⁹³ Gaylord notes the divergence happened no later than the tenth century, and based on the fifteenth century date of the earliest extant Greek manuscript and on certain

They do, however, obviously represent slightly different stances towards this sudden return to earth. It appears more arbitrary in the Greek, both because of the lack of explanation for it and by the 'happencstance' implied in the dissemination of his revelations. By contrast, in the Slavonic the removal from heaven is at least preceded by an authoritative voice that explains that Baruch should actively recount to others what he has seen and learned. The Slavonic ending is more humane, yet it omits the final sanguine statement from the seer in his own words. Thus neither version concludes the text in a perfectly satisfying fashion; both make us feel, as readers, that something important has been lost, forgotten, or hidden, be it the explanation for Baruch's return or the seer himself.

In either case, the conspicuous absence introduced in the final verses of the text underscores the lack of emphasis in 3 Baruch on the seer and, equally, his engaged participation in the intellectual matters raised by the fall of Zion. It favors didactic explanations delivered from angel to human, from a being of limitless knowledge to one of next to none. As such, 3 Baruch's structure as well as its depiction of the demeanor of the seer takes a stance for moderation on both sides of the psychological process. It suggests that humans should experience neither extreme highs nor lows; though the past is surely gone one should resist over-estimating the future of human glory in this New Age. 3 Baruch is likely defining itself polemically against the extreme glorification in the coming Endtimes of individual or communal human potential as found in other apocalypses, including 2 Baruch.⁹⁴ Except by invitation, humanity remains on earth, and no experience will in any way divinize the human in his or her lifetime.⁹⁵ The author of 3 Baruch chose to insert a heavenly non-encounter into this text "in order to correct certain expectations inspired by that par-

points of departure in the Greek, a strong argument for the priority of the tradition behind the Slavonic translation can be made (Gaylord, "Introduction," 653–55).

⁹⁴ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 64–75; cf. Bauckham, "Visions of Hell," 374; Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 87. As we have seen, the seer in 2 *Bar.* is already glorified for his righteousness and will be preserved until the Endtimes. In addition, it is interesting and significant that the optimism in 2 *Bar.*, which distinguishes its tenor from that of the more dour 4 Ezra, in turn appears excessive in comparison with the sober, humble discourse of Baruch on this tour.

⁹⁵ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 59–60.

tical tradition," which includes the divine glorification of the seer and a concern for the restoration of the Temple.⁹⁶

However, Harlow argues that the denial of a vision of God in 3 Baruch underscores the dispensability of the earthly Temple. The prayers and virtues of humanity are delivered to God via angels, not cultic sacrifice. Therefore, since the earthly Temple is rendered unnecessary for a personal encounter, so too is a personal encounter unnecessary in the heavens.⁹⁷ I am not sure that this conclusion captures the emotional logic at work in this particular instance. In an important sense, Baruch's tour concludes as certain dreams do: before they reveal too much. The sudden ending can be read as a defense and an appearance of the 'dream censor,' protecting both the sanctity of God and the psychic integrity of the seer. One can almost picture the visionary stereotypically sitting straight up in bed when he "came to himself," as the Greek version states (3 Bar. 17:3). An addition, as Harlow himself demonstrates, the abrupt ending recapitulates the proscription against emotional discourse from the initial encounter.⁹⁸ Both the beginning and ending could be read as manifest acts of censorship. The relatively mundane experience on earth is reinforced by powerful, sacred associations in the unconscious and appearing 'in the heavens,' i.e., a representative, but protective, fantasy that nonetheless expresses the internal conflict to the world.

The fantastic elaborations of the start and finish of Baruch's vision are both curtailed sharply. This experience creates the psychological return of normal boundaries between earthly and divine realities. The expected relationship between heaven and earth is re-established, both spatially and temporally; no End, no triumphant and purifying New Age with a promise of an idealized, earthly structure, is imminent from the heavenly realm. The prospect of the Heavenly Temple acting as a psychological portent of transformation is entirely removed from the text: earth is real, heaven is real, and they maintain a cosmically unequal relationship. The threat—or promise, depending on one's point of view—of the divine realm subsuming earth and humanity

⁹⁶ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 18–19, 71–75.

⁹⁷ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 73–74.

⁹⁸ Harlow, *Greek Apocalypse*, 56–58. Harlow does note the indications of proper weeping shown to Baruch in the course of his tour: Noah cries for humanity's sinful estrangement from God at 3 Bar. 4:14 in the third heaven; then the angels who do not bear enough human virtues in their baskets weep for the same reason in the fifth (13:1).

into its existence in the immediate future pointedly does not enter into the picture in 3 Baruch. The transitional space between the two realms is, as Picard argues, here devoted to remaking and deepening the understanding of God and his desires for his people—who now, it seems clear, include *all* people of the earth, not just Jews.

If this group of texts that depict the mournful loss of the Temple represents at all a tradition centered around the traumatic memory of the loss of Zion, the tour of the heavens in 3 Baruch shows that the mourning process is complete. The world and its cosmic structure is recovered, God's people are recovered, though in a different sense than in the other texts, and the future is viable once again. Uniquely among the Zion Apocalypses, 3 Baruch operates as if it never allowed the lingering disturbances of the trauma that consumed the others to strike so deeply in the first place. Its structure and content declare that identity in the post-Temple world is no longer shattered. The world provides enough as it is, morally and theologically, to live, love, and believe in it. Yet the very fact that a tour of heavens is still somehow required underscores the belief that a fuller wisdom, and a new, richer perspective, is necessary to know what constitutes the true community of the righteous, the 'friends' of God (3 Bar. 15:2, 4), on the earth and in the cosmos.

CONCLUSION

THE APOCALYPTIC CURE: RECOVERING THE FUTURE BY WORKING-THROUGH THE PAST

As the reflection on the Law, the once and future Temple, and peoplehood of the Jews became institutionalized in the Rabbinic writings of the first millennium C.E., the apocalyptic lingering on the historic trauma represented in the Zion Apocalypses no longer seemed to reflect the existential concerns of the times. Apocalyptic literature of any kind, in fact, largely disappeared from Jewish circles. One important exception to this rule is the Hekhalot/Merkabah literature, which did itself return to Ezekiel's call vision, but which traded historical critique for cosmic speculation along mystical lines.¹ Thus what had once served in the apocalyptic tradition as the key to understanding the hidden secrets of Jewish history was transformed into the key to understanding the hidden secrets of God and the universe in their totality. When the influential Self psychologist Heinz Kohut writes of the completed transcendence of individualistic concerns in the healthy person as the achievement of 'cosmic narcissism,' he could just as well be describing the shift in the apocalyptic focus in the Hekhalot literature.²

In one extraordinary passage in *Hekhalot Rabbati* appears what may be the final word on projecting the emotions aroused by the Temple's loss onto the Divine Being. In contrast to the Zion Apocalypses, the setting places the afflicted in the wake of the destruction of the *Second Temple*.

¹ This stance reflects a scholarly consensus on the connection between apocalyptic literature articulated by Gershom Scholem in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 43; and developed by Ithamar Gruenwald in *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980). On the significance of the relationship between apocalypse and the mystical speculation of late Jewish antiquity for understanding Hekhalot and Merkabah literature, see Elliot Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 75; and Halperin, *Faces*, 63–114. Wolfson notes that Scholem traces the origins of mystical Merkabah speculation back to the school of Yohannan ben Zakkai, the same community that may have produced 2 Bar. (*Speculum*, 76; Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* [Jerusalem: Keter, 1974], 12–13).

² Kohut, "Narcissism," 119–20.

Israel was ready to vent grievances before its Father Who is in heaven, to say: Many misfortunes are befalling us—a great hardship and a huge burden. You said to us, build Me a house and even though you build, occupy yourself with Torah. This is His response to His servants:

Although a great idleness was upon you from the Exile, I longed for the time when I would hear the words of Torah from your mouths. I was angry with you because you did not act correctly, you opposed My majesty. And I rose and I utterly destroyed the cities and houses and the students attending conferences. I did not act correctly when I rose to oppose you and when I commanded a decree upon you. Undoubtedly, it will persist forever and be to Me a source of vexation which will not last only for one, two, ten, or thirty years—or even, with strength, for one hundred or more. Yet, you persuaded Me that you would behave correctly, and I accepted upon Myself your reprimand. *Because the laments of Israel are sweet to Me and cover Me with desire, your words plead in My ears and the speech of your mouths is acceptable to Me. Occupy yourselves with the house of My choice and let not the Torah be removed from your mouths.* (29:1–3a)³

In this dialogue, the People of Israel, after so many years, seem to get what many an abandoned love desires most: an apology. God admits that “from the time of the Exile” he was angry, even justifiably so, but he was wrong to devastate their home, and his actions against his people will “persist forever” for him as a “source of vexation.” The people’s laments are key in producing reconciliation, as well as affirming the importance for the time of both the Law and the Heavenly Temple, which is a central focus of the Hekhalot literature. But the permanence of the Torah in the mouths of his people clearly dominates God’s concern. As the trend from 4 Ezra to the Baruch apocalypses through the reinvention of the meaning and role of the Torah in the Mishnah and Talmud bear out, this was the envisioned basis of a future Jewish society, and with the global scope of the Rabbis in Diasporic Judaism, this future was secured.

This study has documented the power of the symbol of Zion, particularly the image of the lost Temple, to remain potent over centuries, only to reemerge in the wake of national trauma in a fantasy that expresses rage over the injustices that history has wreaked upon

³ “Perkei Heikhalot: Text and Commentary,” in David Blumenthal, *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: A Source Reader* (trans. L. Grodner; New York: KTAV, 1978), 88; emphasis mine. On the setting during the Roman persecutions of the Jews, see Blumenthal’s “Mishna 1” on Perkei Heikhalot (*Jewish Mysticism*, 56) and Wolfson, *Speculum*, 20.

the community and despair that anything short of a total eradication of the current order can make the world right again. The vehicle of this fantasy in a select number of apocalypses is not only a recurrent preoccupation with the Temple and/or Holy City in its actual and idealized forms but also an imagined return to the time of the events that brought about its ruination (or, in Ezekiel, an anticipation of it). Each of the texts examined here as the Zion Apocalypses individually and collectively exhibit what Freud calls the 'compulsion to repeat' the trauma. This psychological defense mechanism also happens to be the key to mastering the pain inflicted and healing the wound altogether. I have dubbed this confluence of historical events, theological concerns, literary conventions, and emotional symptomology 'apocalyptic melancholia.'

The journeys of the visionaries in each of the Zion Apocalypses are psychologically harrowing, at least up to the point at which Baruch is told to "cease irritating God." They are terrifying to the seers on a manifest level, starting with the despair they demonstrate over the ruins of the Temple and culminating in the jolting, uncanny, and sometimes violent visions initiated by their individual *angelus interpres*. More broadly speaking, their horror over the Temple is emblematic of the ruins of their belief in an orderly, Godly cosmos, yet to acknowledge this outright would literally and figuratively cut too close to home. People's rage and sorrow must be directed not just at less threatening targets than YHWH, but at ones that implicate themselves and their own history in their misfortunes. This disconnect between how they feel and the way it is expressed manifests itself in many of the characteristic symptoms of melancholia: ambivalence, anxiety, paralysis, wishes for self-annihilation, or the destruction of the lost love.

The divine interlocutors ratchet up the seer's distress in the course of their dialogues, which ostensibly are meant to placate but often achieve the opposite effect. But just as the Temple, estranged by the unforgiving events of history from its sacred place in the Jewish cosmos, veils an interior full of corruption, shame, and perversity, so to do Ezekiel's muteness, Ezra's rationality, and Baruch's pliability conceal at turns self-annihilating death wishes, grotesque fixations on mothers, wombs, and monstrous births, and unrepentant rage toward both the People of Judah and the God of Israel. Of course, in apocalypse as in the Freudian interpretation of unconscious symbolism, what is concealed and what is revealed are ultimately the same. The decimated Temple edifice can no longer hide the secret history of a corrupt Temple system or

a wayward people; and the lamentations of the apocalyptic visionaries over the external loss of the Temple points the reader toward the unrecognized inner loss of identity, selfhood, and communal structure the end of Zion represented to the texts' authors, redactors, and readers. For the readership and its community as much as the fictive apocalyptician, healing seems to take place by way of the dynamics of mourning, a process by which the living begin to view the world anew by respecting the fact the their loss has altered the world but not stopped it. The key moment of healing appears when the Zionist symbol ceases to be vilified in the past and re-emerges in a perfected, idealized form that can never be lost again. From here, a new future is secured that once again sees continuity with the past and achieves balance between heavenly promises and earthly realities. In Freud's terms, the mourner is free to love again—love God, love the People of Israel, love the universe and all that transpires in it.

This study has sought to bridge the gap between the use of an individualistic psychological theory of the unconscious and its application to a set of ancient scriptures with no identifiable author. Recognizing that they must reflect the concerns of some undetermined subset of the Jews in Exile, in post-70 Palestine, or in the Diaspora, I have appealed to the idea that trauma and subsequent mourning affects the symbolic world of social meaning on both personal and collective levels. This symbolic loss is mitigated against on both levels by reconstructing reality along lines that recast what was lost in a new light. In a word, the world as it once was is reconciled with the events of history by way of a heavily symbolic *fantasy*. Thus a piece of literature that presents clearly communal concerns about the Jewish past, present, and future but puts an individual face on them in the form of a highly emotional, deeply symbolic, personal narrative has all the hallmarks of a creation that lies at the nexus between inner and outer, private and shared, or spontaneous and culturally-determined experiences. The Temple, lost and found again in the other-worldly fantasy known as apocalyptic vision, is the key image that brings all of these experiences together for the texts' readers.

The densely overdetermined Zionist symbols are unpacked in the course of the apocalyptic narratives in much the same way that dream images and neurotic symptoms are unlocked by the psychoanalytic discourse between analysand and therapist. The apparent therapeutic relationship between seer and *angelus interpres*, then, is no accident. However, in terms of their therapeutic value, apocalypses remain

appropriately ambivalent and ambiguous. They are, on the one hand, obviously meant to express the resolution of an otherwise intractable or difficult situation, just as are dreams, psychological symptoms, and the most lasting and powerful art. On the other, they are not revolutionary documents, nor are they magic bullets. Reading or writing them will cause neither people nor God spontaneously to restructure the social order, though some may wait for such a renewal, expecting a change that never comes. The vision is compelling, but not sufficient; it needs to be integrated into everyday life to complete the transformation into a viable, livable worldview. This assessment is in keeping with the mourning model. It accomplishes this project by renunciation and endurance, which are aspects of *work* (*Trauerarbeit*), but also by creation and fantasy, which are aspects of *play* (*Trauerspiel*).⁴ These two elements reflect the tension underlying much of what makes the texts of the Zion Apocalypses so intriguing to scholars and, I believe, to the receptive faithful through the centuries. On both a surface level and below it, these narratives project fear at one turn, hope at another; shattered trust one moment, unshakable faith the next. This tension underpins the radical disjunction in these texts between heaven and earth and between the wicked past and the perfect future, which compels the text and its reader towards a resolution in fantasy.

Yet fantasy images are neither random nor completely idiosyncratic. They are creative and unpredictable, to be sure, but they operate largely within the bounds of personal experience and cultural expectations. That is, a fantasy product coalesces in complex ways the exact place where a person's unconscious wishes and desires meets the restrictive demands of society and projects it out into the world in some way. Consequently this study has compared the various depictions of the Temple or Jerusalem in these texts to cultural products that capture the mournful fantasies of traumatically afflicted societies, following the work of Peter Homans, Donald Winnicott, and scholars of collective memory and national trauma. Zion in apocalyptic visions becomes the Jewish *lieu de mémoire*, a literary monument that points both forward

⁴ Of note here is that the two major social theorists of mourning, Freud and Walter Benjamin, emphasize these two aspects, work and play, respectively. Hence, *Trauerarbeit* denotes the pain and ascetic discipline required to mourn properly, while *Trauerspiel* ('the play of mourning') denotes its creative, recombinative, and interpretive function. See Santner, *Stranded Objects*, 11–12; Max Pensky, *The Dialectics of Melancholy: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning* [Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993]); and Freud, "Remembering," 147–56.)

and back for its readers. Such a commemorative symbol, while defining the presence of the past for its contemporary audience, also gives mnemonic structure to a vision of the future such that a community can assign meaning to the events of history accordingly. The image of Zion as utilized in apocalyptic texts thereby reconciles the apparent disjunction between sacred and profane time. Perhaps it is a fair distinction to say that apocalypse is to the imagined future what physical monuments are to the remembered past. Yet the 'imagined future' is always a function of the 'remembered past' at any given point in time; its prophetic stance allows for a remembered *future* stemming from an imagined *past*.⁵

Monuments heighten this symbolic function for a culture by virtue of their concrete materiality; apocalypses, by virtue of their idealization and determination of space and time. Ultimately, both monuments and apocalypses capture the concerns of the present, resolve ambiguities of the past, and preserve for the future the culture's grounded hopes for survival. At the same time, apocalypse expresses a longing for the concreteness and physicality of the divine world to transform the earth in its present condition and thus bridge the divide between heaven and earth. Therefore the above, below, after, and beforetime warned against in Rabbinic mystical speculation are simultaneously contained in the apocalyptic Zion. If the seers' experiences in the texts examined in this study are any indication, the prohibition was meant to protect against the horrors that threatened one's view of self, God, and the Jewish people that could result from careless inquiry.⁶

Of course, the Zionist structures do not take shape in geographical space or even in visual image *per se* but rather through narrative. As it happens, the key elements in narrative that operate in collective memory, reinforce social solidarity, and lend it to cultural symbolification also emerge as among the most recognizable features of the apocalyptic genre. A stark concern with these elements includes beginnings and endings, the trials and triumphs of heroes, the fearsome impingement of outside forces, shared suffering, the hearkening to a glorious past, and the introduction of mythic plot structures to the

⁵ Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames*, 101–4.

⁶ It is worth recalling the illustration of the dangers of being unprepared to encounter Ezek's call vision in the Merkabah literature from *m. Hag.* 13a, in which a child is consumed by *ḥašmal* upon encountering that word in the text.

events remembered.⁷ The association with myths that commemorate great turning points in a group's history serves as a statement about the way in which those who produced and preserved these texts viewed themselves and their true standing in the world. The central story of the Babylonian Exile defines a certain paradigm of historical meaning, but the Jews' expulsion extends beyond the loss of their nation—they are in exile from a meaningful, consistent cosmos itself. They are bereft of their own center; there is a rift in reality that leaves them wounded and incomplete, and tyrannical, external forces constantly keep this wound open. Their memories almost invariably recall a time before the loss, reflecting a nostalgia for a golden age that is so far in the past that most have never known it. Yet to those who keep its memory alive, its return is always imminent, with the tantalizing promise of resolution and, perhaps, revenge. The restoration of the Jewish community itself, both local to the visionary and as a national whole, is an explicit feature of Ezekiel, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch; in 3 Baruch the future of the People of Israel already seems quite assured, even in the Diaspora.

For this reason, the scholarship of national trauma has been an important frame for understanding the Zion Apocalypses in their social, historical, and psychological contexts. We may not today have direct access to much in the way of key identifiers of the groups or individuals who wrote, read, edited, or preserved these texts. Yet human history is, sadly, replete with examples of other communities that have been devastated on the same scale, and whose legacy of coping with history is available for comparison. Identifiable peoples who have been conquered, killed, enslaved, displaced, or exiled respond in much the same way as our ancient apocalypticists—and our modern melancholiacs. They return nostalgically to an idealized past. They 'remember, repeat, and work-through' the events of the trauma. They turn their homeland into an all-encompassing symbol, which supports an ever-renewable fantasy of return, recovery, and restoration. And they often tell a tale of culpability that might indict some among them as responsible for their misfortunes but may also hold out the hope

⁷ Each of these narrative constituents Irwin-Zarecka (*Frames*, 58) finds highlighted and elaborated in the collective identities constructed, for instance, by the Jews who survived Hitler's and Stalin's persecutions. Zerubavel (*Recovered Roots*, 216-28) recognizes them in the holiday cycle of the new State of Israel. They certainly are apparent in the American 'myths' of its beginnings, and any number of communal narratives that promote one people as distinct, brave, and tenacious over and against others.

for a divine reckoning that balances the cosmic scales of justice and exacts revenge on the guilty parties. With these models at hand and the scholarship that demonstrates their consistently recognizable traits, the Zion Apocalypses can be fruitfully examined in light of this record. The national trauma literature supports the connection in these apocalypses between the psychological and the historical, the individual and the collective, and the realities of the present and the fictions of the past and future.

The qualities of national trauma shared by the Zion Apocalypses have made them perfectly suited to capturing not just the anxieties of their times, but of countless ages as well, including our own. People will identify ever and again with the sentiments therein expressed and be captivated by the symbols of divine validation, power, and restoration. These ancient apocalypses have continuously generated new ones—new interpretations of history made, new ‘Signs of the Times’ determined. Inevitably, though, the signs fail to be fulfilled. When prophecy fails, it is usually made again, and again.⁸ Thus apocalyptic melancholia, in capturing the sense of disappointment of a culture, potentially sets up another disappointment in expecting these transformative ideals to be realized by divine caveat, and still another when the group recoups itself and its ideology and prepares for the End again. When in force, the compulsion to repeat is manifest within the text, and without.

Zion still haunts us today. The image of the Heavenly Temple punctuates Christianity’s own inescapable apocalypse, the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse of St. John. The implications of this study and its mourning model of apocalyptic visions for the Book of Revelation and Christianity in general is properly the subject for another inquiry.⁹ But the fact that the vision of the perfect restoration of the Temple on Earth in the Endtimes is almost ubiquitous today suggests that the Jewish mourning at the center of these texts was, and is, kept alive not only in Christian apocalyptic expectation but within the very structure of Western cultures themselves, as products of Christian ideals and ideologies. While Europe has certainly seen a variety of attempts to establish a New Jerusalem arise throughout its history, from the Crusades to the Anabaptists of Münster and Thomas Muntzer’s ‘eternal

⁸ Festinger, *Prophecy*, 3–32.

⁹ Though the ‘Christianization’ and co-optation of 4 Ezra, 2 Bar., and certainly Ezek as a whole as part of the Christian canon (with an emphasis especially on the restorative vision of the latter half of the book) certainly are noteworthy in this regard.

council' to Britain's Fifth Monarchists, it can be argued that America has been the most overt and successful creation of a 'shining city on a hill' in a 'New World.' The view of the American colonies and then the United States as the 'New Israel' not only motivated many of the earliest settlers, including the 'Pilgrims' of the Mayflower Compact, but it became part of the civic language of the new nation prior to and after the War of Independence.¹⁰ The religious freedoms guaranteed by the new nation accelerated religious innovation, and many utopian and millenarian communities were erected with the intent of planting the seed for the Heavenly Zion to appear and transform the world once again.¹¹ It is as though the Protestant longing to see the True Church and the Kingdom of God on earth encountered the 'blank slate' of the North American continent and, as in 4 Ezra, hundreds or thousands of Americans had a projective fantasy vision of a perfect structure "where no city had been built" that guided the community as it created for itself a radically new future, one tied to the transformative, apocalyptic anticipation of the 'new millennium.'

Given how deeply ingrained the longing for the appearance of Zion is in Western self-understanding, if the current study can speak beyond the ancient Jewish context, it should be to recast the study of national loss and trauma, at least in certain European, American, colonial, and post-colonial contexts, in light of the 'apocalyptic melancholia' of the Zion Apocalypses. Just as some Jews were inclined to cast their later trials in the mold of the experience of the Exile, at various times in European and American history groups large or small have been similarly dispossessed or threatened by what they perceived to

¹⁰ For a brief overview of the role of millennial thought in the formative conceptualizations of America and the United States, see my "Millennial Destiny: A History of Millennialism in America," in *History and Controversies* (vol. 1 of *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America*; ed. by Eugene Gallagher and W. Michael Ashcraft; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006), 270–73. For thorough studies of the topic, see Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes In American Thought 1756–1800* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968). For primary sources that expound on the idea of America as the 'New Israel,' see Conrad Cherry ed., *God's New Israel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

¹¹ For a superb analysis of these groups and their aims in the early American context, see Stephen J. Stein's *Communities of Dissent: A History of Alternative Religions in America* (New York: Oxford, 2003).

be corrupt forces of unstoppable power. The list of national 'Babylons' throughout history is enormous: the Catholic Church to early (and some current) Protestants, the French to the eighteenth century British and their colonies, the British Anglican monarchy to the American revolutionaries; British and American imperial powers, including the Christian church in general, to the Rastafarians of Jamaica; the American government to a vast array of sectarian groups from the racist Aryan Nation and Christian Identity to racially integrated apocalyptic sects such as Peoples Temple and the Branch Davidians; secular American culture for Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses; to the twentieth century proclivity to depict the geopolitical enemies of the United States as later-day Babylons, most notably, perhaps, in Hal Lindsey's 1970s best-seller *The Late Great Planet Earth*, where the Soviet Union is literally identified with Gog's army from Ezekiel 38; to multi-national associations such as the United Nations for any number of conspiracy theorists. This is not even to mention the deep associations brought to the fore when Saddam Hussein's Iraq emerged as a military threat to Western interests in the Middle East, not the least of which, the State of Israel itself.¹² As a counterpart to the symbol that provides refuge and strength, now or in the future, some these groups also have explicitly designated a place where the New Jerusalem and/or the Heavenly Temple will appear on earth.

Any one of these subjects could command a serious study in light of the mourning model of apocalypticism presented here. A thoroughgoing analysis of such a case study may or may not affirm the parallel I am drawing between them and the context and content of the apocalypses that followed the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. But taken as a whole, the recurrence of this motif with regularity seems to indicate that returning to the Temple and the image of its destruction exerts an almost inexorable influence in managing the crisis of symbolic loss in cultures with even a modicum of Biblical self-identification. That is, while exhibiting apocalyptic melancholia, they avail themselves to the apocalyptic cure. In so doing, they transform the culture of defeat brought about by the trauma of history. In its place is a new structure of appreciation, a New City poised to burst through the lie that is reality as it appears to be. It points toward a healed future where, in the

¹² Daschke, "Millennial Destiny," 282-84.

words of the Book of Revelation, “death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, no crying, no pain anymore” (Rev 21:4).

At the heart of all human longing, perhaps, exists this wish. The symbol of the eternal Zion captures at once the terror and disorienting emptiness of loss inherent in life itself as well as the resilient hope that no loss is ever truly the end.

EPILOGUE

APOCALYPTIC MELANCHOLIA AND 9/11

If the melancholic response to trauma is truly rooted in unconscious human psychology, even as it is expressed publically in a variety of shared and received forms, then theoretically the specific motifs and qualities of apocalyptic melancholia should emerge even where there is *no* explicit attempt to cast the destructive event in the language of Jewish apocalypse. One such ‘apocalyptic trauma’ that uncannily reproduces in the responses to it many of the features of the Zion Apocalypses is the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11). If 9/11 was a traumatic loss of the same emotional and symbolic quality as the double destruction of Jerusalem in the ancient Jewish world, we should find that the popular and official American reaction to it reproduced in many key ways the melancholy apocalyptic fantasy exhibited in the ancient Jewish texts: a compulsion to return to the original trauma and repeat the loss over and over again; the misrecognition and censorship of what was actually lost, i.e., a core sense of security in the world and one’s future; a displacement of rage and annihilating fantasies onto innocent and inappropriate targets and their ongoing vilification; and the reproduction in fantasy of that which was lost in an idealized, impervious form.

Loss in the Present

The losses of 9/11 would seem obvious to most: 2,974 lives taken on American soil, which included New York City (NYC) business people, office workers, and tourists in the World Trade Center (WTC), a.k.a. the “Twin Towers”; Department of Defense personnel at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.; passengers and flight crews on four hijacked airplanes; NYC first responders among the firefighters and police; and any number of others on the ground and in the buildings who were just going about their day that morning in September. They included men, women, and children; citizens of numerous countries besides the U.S.; Christians, Jews, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, and members of many other belief systems; military officers and civilians; liberals,

conservatives, and the apolitical. Even though the Twin Towers and the Pentagon represented very specific, symbolic targets, in a very real sense the attacks affected everyone, in the U.S. and abroad. An outpouring of national unity and international solidarity followed.¹

But as a clearly *traumatic* event for the nation, certain aspects of the attacks offer some intriguing parallels with the factors at the heart of the Zion Apocalypses. Most inescapable is the fact that buildings of national symbolic significance were devastated—and, like the Temple in Jerusalem, this devastation repeated itself in uncanny ways that compelled Americans, individually and collectively, to return to the damage again and again.

The architect of World Trade Center, Minoru Yamasaki, wanted the building to be a

living symbol of man's dedication to world peace...a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness.²

Yet both its operation as one of the economic centers of the world and its dominance of and incongruence with the New York skyline relegated to it much less benign and idealistic signification. As the WTC literally and figuratively overshadowed the former architectural icon of Manhattan, the Empire State Building,

it was not New York but the United States that was the empire state, in its imperial power and outreach signified through the new euphemism, globalism. And its phallic icon, the World Trade Center...was uncannily doubled by *twin* towers, ensuring its indestructibility.³

If the doubling of the Towers were meant to reinforce its sense of permanence, it is cruelly ironic, then, that its very duality is the quality that made the trauma visible and inescapable to nearly every person with access to television around the globe. After the first hijacked plane punctured the north tower and caused the world's attention to

¹ See Dereck Daschke, "Mourning in America: Apocalyptic Melancholia," *Clio's Psyche* 14 (2008): 68.

² Quoted in David Simpson, *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 58.

³ Claire Kahane, "Uncanny Sights: The Anticipation of the Abomination," in *Trauma at Home: After 9/11* (ed. J.E. Greenberg; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 108. Emphasis in original.

be riveted to the buildings, eighteen minutes later the second plane exploded inside the south tower.

[T]he uncanny...haunted our perception even as we watched the traumatic collapse of the World Trade Center into itself—falling not once but twice. An uncanny repetition, the doubling externalized our inchoate apprehensions, made the phantasmatic real.⁴

It is this image that played and replayed on our televisions, and then in our heads, for days, if not weeks and months, afterwards. The attacks would have been traumatic by any definition, even for those not an eyewitness to them. Americans everywhere were suddenly vulnerable to the same fearsome, chaotic, disorienting terrorism that previously only countries with a history of ethnic or religious strife, it seemed, had to endure. But now, thanks to telecommunication and the mass media, everyone in America was a virtual eyewitness to the worst terrorist attack in the country's history.

Yet simply seeing the attack on television was not the whole of the experience. What most people saw was the repetition of the attack on ceaseless instant replay:

The images were part of the traumatic symptom already evident in the media's constant repetition of the Towers being struck. Given trauma's peculiar visuality as a psychic disorder, this event seemed to feed trauma by being so highly visual in its happening.⁵

Subsequently, of course, the Pentagon, the national embodiment of military power, was attacked in exactly the same way; hijacked United flight 93, target unknown but likely the White House, crashed in a field in Pennsylvania; and, with the eyes of the world on them, both towers of the WTC fell, one after the other. This was not traumatic repetition playing out over days and years, as in most personal cases, or over centuries, as in the ancient Judaic apocalypses, but over and over again in the span of about two hours. The attacks claimed nearly three thousand lives, but the ripple effect of trauma radiated out from Ground Zero to the populations of both the largest city in America

⁴ Kahane, "Uncanny Sights," 112.

⁵ E. Ann Kaplan, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 2005), 13.

and the nation's capital, the families of the victims, the country as a whole, and the rest of the world.⁶

Bruce Springsteen, nearly channeling the ancient apocalypticists, sang about the aftermath of the day in "My City of Ruins," a song released a year after the attacks:

My soul is lost, my friend/ Tell me how do I begin again?
My city's in ruins/ My city's in ruins⁷

Like Ezekiel, Ezra, and Baruch before him, Springsteen's persona in the song experiences the destruction of his home, his city as the loss of his very self. His past is gone, his future is gone, his present is in ruins (note the doubling of the lament about the city), and he wonders, "How do I begin again?" Of course, like his apocalyptic brethren, the same creative urge that allowed him to express these sentiments—in song, not divine vision—is that which makes the healing process able to begin.

The Work of Mourning

As in other cases of national trauma, the site of the World Trade Center ruins became the focus of mourning and commemoration—*un lieu de mémoire*.

It is as if the sign of disaster, this irrefutable, brutal absence revealed in and at ground zero, demands that "the hole in the real," the term that . . . Jacques Lacan once used to express the sudden apparition of death, not be allowed to remain empty . . .; that it become a site of memory and of remembrance, a place of disaster made meaningful by the representations—personal, collective, commemorative, spontaneous, official—that follow catastrophe, a writing of disaster that is also a *re-membering* (a recollecting and reconstruction) of disaster.⁸

In several ways, some overt, some subtle, the work of mourning the lost towers and their inhabitants began in earnest immediately, with

⁶ It should be noted that the designation 'Ground Zero' itself is a recapitulation of the language used to refer to the epicenter of nuclear detonations—which almost invariably evokes one of the central traumas of the twentieth century, the dual strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Richard Stamelman, "September 11: Between Memory and History," in Greenberg, *Trauma at Home*, 13).

⁷ Bruce Springsteen, lyrics, "My City of Ruins," *The Rising*, CD. Columbia Records, 2002.

⁸ Stamelman, "September 11," 14–15.

shrines and memorials to the dead and missing around Ground Zero, a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance declared by President George W. Bush on September 14, three days after the attacks, and September 11 itself being declared a national holiday, 'Patriot's Day.' A variety of artwork has sought to recover the towers on individual and collective scales, from the kitschy (WTC key chains, depictions of the Twin Towers floating in heavenly clouds or mourned by crying eagles) to the resonant.⁹ Especially important to note in this regard is the Tribute of Light that took place annually in NYC on the anniversary of the attacks. Two enormous beams of light were placed in the footprints of the collapsed WTC towers and shone into the sky. The parallels with the transformation of the Jerusalem Temple into the Heavenly Zion in the apocalyptic literature are striking, to say the least. E. Ann Kaplan experienced both recovery and permanence in her response to the first Tribute of Light on March 11, 2002. She writes,

The gap where the Twin Towers had stood in the weeks that followed became a space full of horror but also of heroism. Their visual absence was traumatic: That is, it was impossible to comprehend that they were gone....[But with the Tribute of Light,] I felt the gap restored to my visual landscape—or at least *there was something there that could not be knocked down*.¹⁰

The absence of the towers demanded to be filled in by projection, literally and psychologically, and what was lost had returned as a perfect form that bridged heaven and earth.

Perhaps the clearest sign that the real-world work of mourning is clearly underway is that the plans for rebuilding in the space once occupied the WTC continue to be refined. New York awarded architect Daniel Libeskind, the designer of Berlin's Jewish Museum, the chance to create a living space at Ground Zero that was both artistic and pragmatic, that engaged in both the work and play of mourning. Its design commemorated the attacks and the lives taken but pointed to a new future for one of the economic and cultural centers of the world. Kaplan says the Libeskind plan reminded her "of the way the

⁹ Karen Engle, "Putting Mourning to Work: Making Sense of 9/11," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (2007), 72–75. Of the cooptation and commodification of mourning that results in kitsch, Engle observes, "When mourning becomes kitschified, totalitarianism is not far behind" (72), a chilling anticipation of the push for war and the vilification of dissent that soon followed the period of national mourning.

¹⁰ Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*, 12, 17–18; emphasis mine.

site looked in the days following the attacks....But the design also suggested the need to think about a new future.”¹¹ Yet as the plan has moved toward construction, more and more of the symbolic elements have been subsumed by the economic and logistical realities of building in the space—a distinctly unsentimental turn for what is now recognized as hollowed ground on par with Pearl Harbor and Gettysburg.

Of course, the effects of the 9/11 attacks were hardly limited to the actual lost or dead, or the buildings in which they died. Arguably on a symbolic level the losses continued to mount for some time, if not always in such obvious ways. What did the attacks reveal about Americans that they did not know or were unwilling to comprehend? What cherished self-conceptions were they forced to give up, faced with this startling new reality? Certainly the first to go was the notion that U.S. borders protected by two vast oceans on either side of the continent offered its citizens a respite from the political realities of the rest of the world. They were also forced to accept that their country must not be universally loved. The loss of love and the resulting loss of protection—Americans suddenly were terrorized by the two great Oedipal fears, only on a scale never-before imagined.

Unlike the classical Oedipal situation, however, Americans did not repress the aggressive response to the loss of love. In a very literal and demonstrable sense, public sentiment revolted against any honest probing of either the terrorists’ motives or the nation’s own responsibility in them. To do so was ‘siding with the enemy’ and ‘blaming America first.’ This lack of self-recrimination represents a distinct departure from the emotional tenor of the Zion Apocalypses. Without an omniscient God or an *angelus interpres* to act as a critical agency for the American people, the rage and blame were all directed onto external targets. Significantly, identification with the attackers was completely proscribed, to the point that literally they could not be identified. Over the course of the next two years, in American collective ‘memory’ the fifteen Saudi hijackers unconsciously became Iraqis; all Muslims joined al-Qaeda by association; and a majority Americans found it unnecessary to differentiate between Sunnis and Shi’ites or between Osama bin

¹¹ Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*, 142. For a clear summation of the ideology Liebeskind’s design and the various controversies and conflicts that surrounded it, see Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*, 140–47.

Laden and Saddam Hussein. The president himself said a year after the attacks, "[Y]ou can't distinguish between al-Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror."¹²

The vast array of factors and motivations that led to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 lay far outside the scope of this brief inquiry. But if one can accept, like the president, that while there is not a *direct* connection between the events of 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, there is certainly a *symbolic* one, this association speaks as clearly about the trigger, 9/11, as the response, Iraq. The unconscious association of 9/11 with the Iraqi 'threat' is 'true' and 'real,' even if the objective facts of the relationship are not. The invasion of Iraq speaks volumes about what Americans lost in September 2001 and what they craved to recover. As in many cases where one has been deeply hurt, wounded, and traumatized, they lashed out primarily *not* at the obvious cause of their suffering, but at something else entirely, something whose own misfortune would satisfy in ways what most only could barely acknowledge, let alone understand. Was the invasion of Iraq, then, a melancholic response to the symbolic, collective, national losses of 9/11? When Ron Suskind reports that, before the 2004 election, a senior administration official derisively referred to journalists, scholars, scientists, and other objectively-informed figures as the 'reality-based community,' it suggests strongly that a melancholic fantasy underlay the president's approach to the 'War on Terror' and the support for it.¹³ So too did the belief among Americans that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the attacks, even as every piece of evidence since his overthrow has conclusively shown the exact opposite. This misconception has been resolutely persistent over time, too. As late as the sixth anniversary of the attacks, fully one third of Americans and forty percent of Republicans held to the notion. Such loyalty to a falsehood, especially such a bloody and costly one, is literally unfathomable unless seen as a symptom of melancholia, *viz* "a turning away from reality...and a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful

¹² "President Bush, Colombia President Uribe Discuss Terrorism," The White House, 25 September 2002 (n.p.). Cited 21 January 2008. Online: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020925-1.html>.

¹³ Ron Suskind, "Without a Doubt," *The New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 2004 (n.p.). Cited 9 August 2009. Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/17/magazine/17BUSH.html>.

psychosis.”¹⁴ In this light, a number of other features of the Iraq War and the War on Terror begin to cohere together.

One of the most salient aspects of melancholia is the compulsion to repeat the original trauma, invoking it constantly, making the traumatic past now ever-present. One does not have to look very far to find President Bush and members of his administration setting almost every decision in the context of 9/11, most especially the choice to invade Iraq. The struggles in Iraq, in fact, for a very long time provided an environment of 9/11-associated traumas repeating themselves endlessly, thus always serving as their own reminders and justifications and making sure the original experience of trauma never dissipated. For instance, the U.S.’s abuses and torture at Abu Ghraib prison strikes me, if viewed through a melancholic lens, as a displacement of trauma onto a highly overdetermined symbol of its attacker. Unfortunately, this symbolification happens to be projected onto the bodies of actual human beings. The trauma of 9/11 was repeated on other bodies, which fueled the resentment against the American forces in Iraq and elsewhere, which created more enemies, including by the summer of 2007 a foe identified as ‘al-Qaeda in Iraq.’ With the impeccable logic of melancholia, by attacking a fantasy of an attacker, the U.S. made the fantasy a reality—*notwithstanding the fact that this ‘al-Qaeda’ was not in any essential way the al-Qaeda that plotted 9/11.* Thinking they were fighting the ‘true’ enemy, Americans fought instead the fantasy enemy that kept the whole illusion operational.

Perhaps the most striking evidence for melancholia in the American mood from 9/11 to the early years of the Iraq invasion was revealed when broad sentiment finally and decisively turned against President Bush and his war policy. As the apocalypses that followed the destruction of the Second Temple have demonstrated, most who remember the trauma as a pivotal moment in the history of the nation eventually begin to assess pragmatically the new world left in its wake. The fantasy loses its power to subsume all meaning to itself, and adapting to a new world in the future takes priority. The melancholy rumination on the past falls out of favor, and true mourning begins.

Arguably, this transition began very soon after Bush’s re-election. A number of his domestic initiatives, including privatizing Social Security and nominating Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court, failed. The

¹⁴ Freud, “Mourning,” 244.

aura of competence and political dominance began to fade. Then the violence in Iraq spiraled out of control. Inspectors determined conclusively that Hussein did not have weapons of mass destruction or even much of a program for building them at the time of the invasion. Subsequently, a host of information about the misuse and political reshaping of the intelligence on Iraq came to light. Reality was inexorably deconstructing the fantasy that connected Iraq to 9/11, and the president again was found to be something quite other than what he had presented himself to be. Finally Hurricane Katrina dealt the most decimating blow to the Bush image as the storm and the botched evacuation from it ravaged New Orleans. Voters channeled their discontent in the midterm elections of 2006, unambiguously signaling that the 9/11-Iraq-terror narrative that had driven the national discourse for two election cycles no longer resonated with the majority of the country.

Recovery in the Future

If there has been mourning in the present for Americans, is there a vision of the future in the offing, one that will finally restructure and recover the country's sense of itself in the aftermath of both 9/11 and a draining, misbegotten war set into motion by melancholic rage and vengeance? The 2008 presidential election certainly seemed at the time to have offered just such a vision in the campaign of Barack Obama. Obama, who spoke out against the war as an Illinois state senator, explicitly ran on a platform of change and hope that in many specific ways brought to light and rejected the melancholic compulsion to return to the initial wounded response that followed 9/11 and begat the Iraq War. From withdrawing troops and concluding the war offensive in Iraq to rejecting the use of torture and military tribunals in the name of national security, Obama's rhetorical skills effectively dismantled the vengeful fantasy that had re-elected Bush four years earlier. To be sure, had the call to lash out at global enemies still resonated with the majority of the electorate, Republican John McCain—an older, distinguished military hero who represented virtual continuity with Bush policies—would have captured the mood of the voters much more readily. Obama's election was a clear indication that the country was ready for something new. This president would engage the rest of the world and build relationships rather than come down upon it with

vengeance. Applying the mourning model to the U.S.'s losses after 9/11, this turn would represent at the end of mourning the ability of Americans to love again—love their nation and its core principles, as well as taking the risk of trusting other peoples, even unfamiliar ones, and developing a relationship with them.

In his first year in office, as of this writing, the Obama administration has taken some concrete and admirable steps to realize that promise. Yet all too often, the new president has adopted his predecessor's secretive policies and tendencies, and he has been reluctant to pursue any kind of investigation or inquiry into Bush's likely illegal and unconstitutional war efforts because it is time to 'move forward' not 'look backward.'¹⁵ Unfortunately, if the premise, illustrative investigations of texts, and conclusions of this study of apocalyptic melancholia are correct, then the president's stance is antithetical to his campaign promise to capture the 'fierce urgency of now' to transform the post-9/11 politics and culture of the country. Americans long to conclude the mourning arc in a way that builds "up again all that war has destroyed, and perhaps on firmer ground and more lastingly than before," as Freud wished for the European continent in "On Transience."¹⁶ The U.S. cannot move forward without creatively and fearlessly engaging with the past.

Still, as the apocalyptic literature has made clear, both the sentiment and the vision that transforms it into a path forward does not come from the institutional powers at the center of the society. During the Bush years many Americans felt they were ideological refugees in their own country; what's more, the deluge of Hurricane Katrina produced actual refugees within America. Refugees and exiles who hold onto a lost ideal of one's homeland seem to be one of the component groups that would make up the 'community of memory' that responds to the apocalyptic reconstruction of reality through symbolic mourning. Those who have felt the pain the worst are then in the best place to bring about the cure. As wounded healers, the apocalyptic seers produced visions that represent a potent mixture of creativity and realism.

¹⁵ "[M]y general belief is that when it comes to national security, what we have to focus on is getting things right in the future, as opposed looking at what we got wrong in the past" ("Obama: Time to look forward, but Bush aides aren't above the law," *USA Today* [n.p.]. Cited 5 July 2009. Online: <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2009/01/61177294/1>).

¹⁶ Freud, "On Transience," 307.

They reach back into the collective tradition to recover elements that could lay a concrete foundation for a new order of society, with a new story of itself.

What this means for the American people is a recognition that the post-9/11 world is the new reality, but that does not require an obsessive dedication to re-experiencing that day in other wars, unleashing their despair on the most easily vilified substitute. It will have to overcome the propensity toward idealizing its own past and interests, while demonizing anyone deemed responsible for the moral laxness that made the nation vulnerable, as Ezekiel does. It will require an honest, self-critical, but ultimately redeeming look at what the country once was, but is no longer, as Ezra does in his Vision of the Weeping Woman. It will have to rebuild itself with the ideals of law as it operates in a democracy in much the same way that the seer of 2 Baruch rediscovers the place of Torah Law in Diaspora life. Only then will the people be free from their need to inflict trauma on themselves and others and, like the liberated visionary of 3 Baruch, be able see the world anew, as a whole, from greater and greater heights. Americans have apparently begun the work of mourning. But giving themselves free rein to exercise their creativity and even to play in response to the America left in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq War will likely be a far more painful endeavor. Still, if the apocalyptic tradition indicates anything, it is that over time, a few acutely attuned individuals will see the future as it can be, and they will lay its foundations while most are not even aware. This is the apocalyptic cure, and only the freedom to be honest about the past and hopeful about the future will bring it about.

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